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AND OTHER SKETCHES OF INDIAN LIFE

BY ANNIE H. SMALL

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PREFACE.

THE following sketches are history and not fiction, although for obvious reasons neither place nor date is stated. For the place, it is enough to remind the reader that India is a continent: my reminiscences belong to cities almost as distant the one from the other as John o' Groats from Land's End. For the date, any time these fifteen years will give an idea accurate enough for all purposes. For the persons I have here tried to introduce, they belong to widely differing races and castes and positions in the social scale; their languages are foreign not only to us but to each other; Raghoba would count the proud Bai Saheb as an unclean thing, the Moulvi would defile himself by eating bread which Suwarta or Shiwadi had touched: yet all meet, I trust, amicably enough within the covers of my little book. Is this a whispered prophecy of the

day when all shall unite to sing "unto Him who has redeemed us to God by His blood out of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation; and has made us to be unto our God a kingdom and priests"?

There are in our land many societies and unions striving together by prayer and by effort to hasten that glad day. With one of these I had many years of most happy connection; and I have therefore much pleasure in inscribing these reminiscences of service abroad to the Society with which I had connection at home—

THE WOMAN'S FOREIGN MISSIONARY SOCIETY
OF THE
FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND.

A. H. S.

EDINBURGH, *Nov. 1893.*

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SUWARTA'S HOME.

SUWARTA.

(*Extracted from my Journal.*)

I HAVE had a curious and interesting glimpse of human nature to-day, which is almost worth while recording in full. Suwarta has been for a considerable time under religious impressions; she was indeed one of those who rose when called upon at the evangelistic meetings in November, and expressed her desire to be a Christian. She has not hitherto taken me into her confidence; and as she has always been a thoughtful, conscientious girl, I have not been sure whether there was a real change or not. Last evening's lesson with the elder girls was upon Peter's denial of our Lord, and the text I gave as a motto was; "*Not that we are sufficient of ourselves.....but*

our sufficiency is of God" (2 Cor. iii. 5); and in the few words I said, I rather emphasized the fact of our own human weakness than dwelt upon the history of Peter's fall.

Late in the evening there came a tap at my door, and Suwarta appeared.

"Please, Missie," she said, "I have been thinking of the Bible-lesson very much, and I wish to tell you something. Please don't think me very bad."

I concluded that some serious confession must follow such a beginning, and giving her a stool to sit upon, said encouragingly,—

"Well, dear, what is the difficulty?"

"Missie, I think Peter could have kept from denying Jesus if he had liked."

"Do you?" I asked. "Well, so do I, Suwarta; if only he had not been so proud before the temptation. Do you remember—

> 'He that is down need fear no fall,
> He that is low no pride'?"

But Suwarta was not yet satisfied, and evidently found an explanation of her difficulty no easy matter. I watched her sweet face for a few moments, and then said, as gently as I could: "Tell me, dear Suwarta, what is in your mind. I will help you if I can."

"I do wish to be a Christian, Missie," she whispered shyly at length, "and I do try to be good. I read every day, and pray to God, and I have been so happy; but to-night Peter's story has made me unhappy again, because you said that we could not be good ourselves."

"And you think you can, dear?"

"Yes, Missie, if I try."

"Well, then, Suwarta, suppose you just go on trying. But remember, dear, that past sin has to be got rid of; that when we break one command, it is as if we had broken all; and that wrong thought and wrong motive are just as truly sin as wrong action, because God looks down into our hearts."

The girl looked awed for a moment; but her self-reliance came to her aid, and she once more expressed her assurance that "trying very hard" meant success.

"Very well, Suwarta," I said, as she rose to go; "I shall like to know how you get on. When will you begin?"

"Now—to-night."

"Then may I ask you to do something? Will you come and tell me the first time you feel you have failed? That may be a long time hence, but will you remember to come and tell me?"

To this Suwarta agreed, and we bade each other

good-night. As a rule I pray with any girl who comes to speak to me, but somehow it did not seem appropriate in this case, and we parted with only the usual evening salutation.

I retreated at once to my bedroom, being unusually tired; and had just lowered my light, when Suwarta appeared once more in her white night attire.

"Please, Missie," she said, "I am going to begin to-morrow."

"Why not to-night, Suwarta?"

"Because I did wrong quite suddenly to-night," was the rather shamefaced confession. "One of the girls had gone to sleep on my bed, and I got very angry. I am so sorry; but I'll begin to-morrow morning."

"All right, Suwarta. Good-night," I said; and as I lay down, I pondered over the wisdom or unwisdom of my dealing with this case. Was it better that the child should learn her weakness by bitter experience, and so learn it thoroughly; or ought I to have tried to explain in mere words the lesson she needed? And I fell asleep while moralizing with myself that my teaching that evening had been far in advance of my own experience. Like Suwarta, I have a pretty strong faith in my own will, notwithstanding many a downfall.

I was awakened this morning early by a voice outside my door, and the usual, "Please, Missie."

"Well?" I called. "Come in."

"Please, Missie" (Suwarta again!), "I am so sorry to disturb you, but you told me to come at once."

"Any difficulty, dear?"

"Yes; Prema put water on my face to waken me, and I got very angry again. I was sound asleep, and had no time to remember."

With some difficulty I repressed a strong inclination to laugh at the forlorn little figure. I succeeded, however, in saying gravely,—

"Well, Suwarta, what do you mean to do now?"

"I shall begin now. I shall tell Prema I am sorry I was cross, and then I shall begin."

Clearly this was to be a case of "try, try, try again;" so I sent the child away with a word or two of encouragement, and proceeded to prepare for prayers. Of late each of us has repeated a text before our hymn; and Suwarta had chosen an appropriate motto for the day, which she stated in a triumphant tone which amused me—"I will walk within my house with a perfect heart." Evidently her two falls had in no way damped her ardour; Peter was not more sure of himself than was my dear little pupil. I had hardly finished breakfast, however, when she reappeared. This time she declined to explain the

nature of her failure, but insisted that it was only because she "forgot" that she failed, and that she had now fastened a piece of ribbon to the front of her jacket "to remember her," so that she must begin again "only once more."

There were several forgets, however, for each of which there was a ready excuse, although after each she started with less courage. The climax was reached during the first hour of afternoon school, when, to my astonishment, I heard Suwarta's voice in loud altercation with the pundit. Such a thing had never happened before, and I arose from my class and crossed the schoolroom. The pundit evidently did not understand this new development in his favourite pupil, and stood gazing at her rather helplessly.

"What is this, master?" I asked.

"Suwarta is very troublesome this afternoon, Miss Saheb; she has done no work at all. But she was never naughty before, and I do not wish to complain. Perhaps she is not well."

"Suwarta must do her work," I said, "and do it at once;" but knowing well the struggle which had led to this most unwonted scene with the good girl of the school, I touched her shoulder gently as a hint that I understood and sympathized. There was a momentary struggle, but it ended in her taking books

and slate and going quietly on with her work. After supper I found an opportunity of saying,—

"If you would like another talk this evening come over to my room."

We have had a long talk; probably we have both learned something from the day's experiences. At any rate, we did not part this time without committing ourselves to God's keeping.

"What text will you say to-morrow, Suwarta?" I asked as we parted.

She smiled through her tears at the recollection of the text she had repeated in the morning, as she answered,—

"I shall say bits of two texts—'The Lord turned, and looked upon Peter;' 'And Peter went out, and wept bitterly.'"

THE OLD HOUSE.

A FAMILY GROUP.

Characters and Scenes from a Mahometan Zenana.

AN ideal Oriental home!

The great ruinous block was swarming with life—life romantic, tragic, solemn, joyful, mysterious, commonplace—had one only had time or opportunity to enter fully into its secrets. But the most a missionary can do, as a rule, in such a house, is to make as many friends as possible, and to afford as much teaching, aid, or comfort as possible to such as need what she has to give. Here, however, were unusual facilities even in the course of ordinary visitation for the study of human nature, especially such phases of it as are developed by purdah life.

I suppose that I never saw even the half of the population of that building; yet to tell of all whom I did see and know, from the stately Bai Saheb to the crippled old invalid who "had suffered many things of many physicians, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse," would fill a volume. It will be enough to take almost at random half-a-dozen characteristic scenes from this zenana, sketching these very slightly, and leaving the imagination of the reader to run to and fro at will over the rest of the gloomy old place.

The house in its best days must have been more commodious than beautiful, now it is positively hideous. One side of the square, that facing the entrance archway, has fallen into disrepair: there is no vestige of a roof; the window-frames are shutterless; and the walls are fast crumbling away. The remaining three sides are dwelling-houses, in which live relatives of the Saheb, nearer or more distant, poorer or richer, but all more or less dependent upon him.

The centre of the square is a well-built tank, in which play thousands of glistening fish, and around which are smooth square blocks of stone whereon the men stand to bathe, or whereupon they beat their clothes into whiteness,—and into rags. Below are, as usual, public rooms, a great hall wherein feasts religious and otherwise are held, and smaller

rooms, the lounging-places of groups of men, who, reclining upon their mats or charpais, smoking their hookahs, playing cards, or gossiping, while away the weary hours of the day; for the possession of a little money is a dangerous thing in a hot climate, insidiously inviting to indolence and selfishness. There are several staircases, none in a very good state of repair. We use, as safest to life and limb, that which is best lighted. It is dirty—what staircase is not in this land?—and steep, and broken, and dark; but it has carried safely a generation or two of men, and, at rare intervals, of women; and we may be well assured it will not be repaired until it falls through, let us hope without carrying anybody with it. Upstairs upon the landing are doors enough to bewilder a stranger, before each of which hangs a purdah; and along the galleries on each side are also doors and windows, all purdahed. Each door leads into the house of one or another member of the clan: that is, the room or rooms where live the wives and children of the men we passed below. The house is, in fact, a town on a small scale; and each of these purdahs shuts in so much family history, while all taken together—however, I found that to be impossible, as will be seen later on.

Which brings me naturally to the inhabitants of the house.

HER LADYSHIP.

My first introduction to the Bai Saheb was characteristic, as I discovered when I knew her better. A somewhat imperious message was sent to one of our schools to the effect that the Bai Saheb had the honour to request that the Miss Saheba would call upon her. I already knew the lady well by reputation. Her alms were the subject of public discussion. At Bakrá-Id, the Feast of the Goat, held in memory of the gracious deliverance wrought for the patriarch Ishmael, when Alla, by the hand of an angel, saved him from the knife of his father Ibrahim, twenty poor families received from her bounty a dinner of goat's flesh; and at each other festival a similar seasonable gift was bestowed. Never was fakir's cry heard below her window in vain. A servant was commanded to bring food or fruit, the dole was filled, and lowered gently to meet the arms of the holy man who waited confidently below. It was said, too, that no woman ever exceeded her in the regularity of her devotions, or in the rigour of her fasting, or in the general saintliness of her life. Yet was there always a something left unsaid, to be whispered where no tales could be carried—a something which left the impression of a hard, bitter, uncompromising woman. Was love the one thing lacking?

When the invitation reached me I drove out to the old house at once, somewhat curious, I confess, regarding its meaning, being well assured that whatever else she might have in view, she had no desire to bring her family under Christian influence.

On being admitted within the purdah leading to her rooms at the head of the staircase which I have already described, I found myself in a handsome diwán-*kh*áná.* A bright Persian carpet covered the floor, and beautifully-carved blackwood furniture stood in stiff array round the walls. Shelves bore upon them a variety of massive silver dishes, bowls, and trays; while a brass bed was the central and somewhat incongruous ornament. A number of smaller rooms apparently branched off from this central room. The purdah of one of these was drawn aside to admit me, and here I was received with much distinction by a middle-aged, dignified, aristocratic dame. We exchanged the usual civilities—they mean no more in this country than they do in England—then, judging it best to enter into business at once, I asked whether I could be of any service.

"I hear that you go about in the city teaching girls and women?"

To this indictment I pled guilty.

* Reception room.

"Do you go to the house of any one who invites you?"

"Unless I find good reason to decline doing so."

"Your father is a padri,* I believe?"

"He is."

"And you take all this trouble for God's name's sake?"

"Yes."

So far my answers appeared to give satisfaction, and there was a pause while the lady drew to her side the inevitable pán-dán,† and daintily prepared and presented the unwelcome mouthful. Then she resumed.

"But you Christians have such dreadful customs, that you must pardon me for asking more questions. Your ladies and gentlemen dance all night sometimes. Is this not true?"

I pled guilty, adding, however, the excuse that it was a custom which had not the same associations which nautches have in this country; also I added, for she was looking very severe, that many of us did not dance at all.

"Do *you* dance?" was her next very direct inquiry.

"No."

"Then do you go to those dreadful races where

* Minister, *lit.* father

† Silver spice-box.

our men waste all their money, and come home drugged with English brandy?"

"No."

"Miss Saheba will pardon me for one more question. Miss Saheba doubtless knows our laws. Do you drink wine?"

"I do not, lady."

She now rose and left me, returning after a little with two young women, whom she introduced as her daughters.

"I am anxious they should learn English," she said, "and such English customs as will be good for them to know; but I have feared, having heard much about English ways, to put them under the charge of a teacher. Then I heard of you, that you were a priest's daughter, and I thought they might be safe. Will you teach them?"

This was a new experience to me, and one only to be borne because it was new. As a rule, the catechizing and the making of conditions is on our side. I determined not to be too easily caught; and while smiling in a friendly way to the girls, I said that I was a missionary, and taught the Christian faith. To this, with a proud toss of the head, which threatened that opportunities for doing so in her house would be few, she answered that *that* was no difficulty. In the same manner she set aside

other conditions which I made, and eventually day and hour were agreed upon for a first lesson.

The girls and I speedily formed a strong friendship, and for their sakes I bore with their mother. She proved, as I had foreseen, a very dragoness over us. No asides were allowed; we were kept most steadfastly to the work in hand; we were interrupted and hampered at every turn by orders to translate for her benefit the lesson we were studying. As for missionary work proper, I saw that she intended effectually to prevent it. The only outlet I had for long was in the singing of hymns, which, strange in one of so hard a nature, the Bai Saheb herself greatly enjoyed, and encouraged even to the extent of uniting her own very masculine and unmusical voice with ours. But Bible lessons were strictly prohibited for long.

"Are we not also Kitábi log [people of a book]? Why should we try to convert one another?" was her answer to a very direct appeal on one occasion.

Then I tried a little wholesome neglect, and for two or three weeks absented myself. When summoned to the lady's presence once more, I told her that my time was more than occupied already with pupils who were willing to read the Gospel, and that I really could not undertake to go on with such as declined to do so.

"You are evidently afraid of the Gospel," I said. "There are those here in the city who find it their greatest comfort. They have the first claim upon me."

"Bring the book," she said at last.

"Remember," I answered, "I do not wish to force it upon you. You will find easily an English teacher who will come without it; indeed, I shall search for one if you wish."

"No, no," said Zahibunissa; "do anything with us, but do not leave us again, as if you did not care what became of us." And so, for the sake of the girls, I once more resumed the weekly visit. But the Bai Saheb outwitted me constantly by such means as I could not condescend to use in return; and only the appealing looks of Fáthmá, and the friendly squeezes which Zahibu gave my hand when her mother's head was turned away, prevailed with me to waste the hours I did upon a house of which I wrote:—"No missionary work is lost when the Bai Saheb's hour is left out of the week's planning."

The Bai Saheb was a woman in whom did not exist, or I never discovered, any womanly weakness at all. She ruled husband, poor man, and daughters, and the large population of the house, with an iron rule; and though often most distaste-

ful, her will was never disputed. I am wrong; it was disputed once, by one who, when roused, proved as strong of will as herself, and who triumphed. But that triumph cost the rebel, as will be seen, home, and family, and all religious and social fellowship with her own people.

ZAHIBUNISSA AND HER HUSBAND.

The elder of the Bai Saheb's daughters was a clever, bright girl of seventeen or eighteen years, very accomplished, as Moslem women count accomplishments: that is, she read Arabic with more understanding of its meaning than is common, she also read Persian, Urdu, Gujerati, and Hindi; she worked most exquisite embroideries in gold and silver thread; and she was an heiress in her own right—the last of which charms had been her ruin, for it had brought her a husband of birth more than equal to her own, but of character and manner of life far too degraded to be described here. He was essentially a "brutish" man, devoted to eating and drinking and pleasure-hunting; another edition, as I often thought, of poor "Cousin Amy's" boorish mate, though, fortunately for this poor wife, the "grossness of his nature" had no power to draw her down. She made a brave struggle to win him in

the early days of their married life. By the time I knew the couple she had lost hope, and contented herself with keeping him in order. He was promptly ordered out of sight when his presence was not desirable, which, thanks, alas! to English brandy, was far too often; his pocket money was limited, and even fines were occasionally imposed; while all was done with a graceful dignity which, had he been worthy of the name of man, must have roused him into something like independence of character. I learned most of these particulars from the ordinary gossip of the house. The first occasion upon which I myself saw Zahibunissa roused to action was during the last illness of her father.

I missed her husband one day from amongst the hookah-smokers below, and Zahibunissa told me with a joy which, poor girl, she could not conceal, that he had left home with the intention of making a long tour through the country. He was thoroughly tired of the enforced quiet which his father-in-law's illness imposed, and had asked her for money to join a party of friends who intended to travel all the cold season. She was too loyal a wife to *say* that she rejoiced in her freedom, and she sternly forbade any expression of gladness in her presence; but she could not hide the rest which had come to her with the prospect of his absence for some months.

"She gave him five hundred rupees for his trip," whispered one of the other women, "and she thought it a cheap price to pay for his absence."

Studies went on that season with great regularity; and the Bai Saheb, being much occupied with her dying husband, relaxed the strictness of her watch. The girls, who were both in sore need of sympathy and friendship, were able to speak of their sorrows, and to claim the love which their mother was unable to give them from the friend who belonged neither to their race nor their faith. Zahibunissa inherited not a little of her mother's strength of will. That she disliked a study was to her rather a reason for continuing than for giving it up. I never heard her allow that any task I set to be done was difficult to work or to understand. If she did not fully follow a lesson, she never acknowledged her failure, but thought the subject out before our next meeting, when, as a rule, she was able to give a very lucid explanation of the difficulty. Thousands of English girls will answer to this description; but English girls are to the manner born, and trained from infancy. We do not often find such pupils in Indian zenanas; when found, we make much of them.

Her husband—for it is with Zahibu as a wife that we have to do—had not been gone many weeks when one day she drew from under her pillow three or

four telegrams and asked me to read them. They were all from her husband, and were dated from a city in the North-West Provinces. Each stated most urgently that travelling was far more expensive than they had imagined; that he had reached his last rupee, and must stay where he was until she sent him what would bring him home again. A curl of the lips was her only sign of feeling as she held out her hand for the telegrams and hid them under her pillow again; and I saw that even her mother thought it best to make no remark.

As I rose to leave, Zahibunissa said in a low tone,—

"Missie Bai, last year you made the same journey that my husband is making. Do you remember how much it cost you?"

"Within two hundred and fifty rupees."

"Thank you."

In the afternoon of the same day a covered carriage drove up to our door, and when privacy had been secured, Zahibunissa alighted.

"Would Missie Bai have the kindness to write out a telegram to my husband?" said the girl, whose face for the moment almost too nearly resembled her mother's in its stern and set expression.

"With pleasure," I answered, fetching at once the necessary form and a pencil. "What do you wish me to say?"

"Say that I have bought a bungalow at the river side, and have no ready money in hand at present."

"Is this true, Zahibu?"

"Certainly, it is true; I knew you would not send the telegram if it were not. Besides, my only safety lies in having no money. God help me!"

"And will you leave him at Patna?"

"As long as he cares to stay. He has raised money when necessary before now; let him do so again."

She was quite right, for when the days of mourning for the old man were ended, Zahibunissa's husband reappeared, less a man, if possible, than ever, and more obviously a crushing burden upon his wife. Outwardly, indeed, she rendered to him all the duty and obedience that were his due, addressing him with respect, preparing with her own hand the dainties wherein his soul delighted, and waiting upon him, when sober. But a less sympathetic and pained onlooker than I might well have seen how she loathed him when under the influence of "English brandy."

"Where is Zahibu?" I asked one day when she did not appear for her lesson.

"She has gone away," was the reply. "She has taken her husband to their house in his native vil-

lage, where 'English brandy' will not be found, and where she may force him to be sober."

And I never saw Zahibunissa again.

FÁTHMÁ.

A much less outwardly attractive pupil than Zahibunissa was her sister Fáthmá. She was a heavy, sleepy-looking girl, with a countenance which at first impressed one as sullen. Ere long, however, a very tender sympathy possessed me in place of this somewhat unpleasant first impression; for Fáthmá was as clinging as her sister was self-reliant, and nowhere within or without that great house had she found a staff to lean upon. Zahibunissa was kindly, but naturally enough was absorbed in her own cares; the weak old man, their father, could afford little sympathy, far less aid; while if the Bai Saheb could be said to be more stern and unloving towards one person than she was towards all, that person was poor Fáthmá. This aloneness was apparent even when I first made acquaintance with the family, and found how precious to this girl was a look of love or a word of praise; and as sorrows increased, and her sensitive nature shrank more and more into itself, I would fain many a time have taken her into my arms, and whispered, "Come away with me; I love you."

When first I knew Fáthmá she was betrothed to a man of some position and wealth in another town; but it was said that rumours of her lack of beauty had reached the bridegroom's family—in any case, the match was broken off in a manner most humiliating, if not insulting, to the poor girl. As if this were not enough, she was visited with extreme harshness in her home on account of the so-called disgrace implied to the family, and her spirit was thus lacerated and wounded at every turn. That she had become the subject of gossip amongst the members of the large household in no degree lightened her heavy burden; and even from my unspoken sympathy she shrank as a sensitive plant does against the gentlest touch, and for weeks I greatly dreaded for her some serious mental catastrophe.

That a husband of some sort must be found for her, and that without delay, was the one possible decision, and I was not surprised, though still deeply anxious, when informed by her mother one morning that Fáthmá was to be married almost immediately.

"She does not look very like a bride, does she?" said the Bai Saheb sarcastically, looking across at the downcast face opposite. "She fails to see that a cross-eyed, plain girl who has already lost a husband must take what she can get."

"Are *you* satisfied, Bai Saheb?" I asked, for my

heart sank strangely at this manner of announcing what is as a rule so very joyful an event in an Indian house.

"Oh, I am only too glad to get her off my hands. We shall have no tamáshá at the marriage, so I regret I shall be unable to invite you, Missie Bai. We intend having the ceremony at once, and her father's state of health forbids any noise or excitement," with which extra stab—for to an Indian girl the marriage festivities are most important—the Bai Saheb rose and left us.

I took Fáthmá into my arms and kissed her, feeling convinced that a good cry would bring relief. After a little she began to speak quietly.

"My heart is hot. O Missie Bai, what marriage is this? Could I not be as you are? Why should I marry? This man has wives and children, but he wants money. He takes my dowry, and I am thrown in, with the understanding that he need not take me home unless for a visit, just to say I am a wife. I see through it all, although they pretend that I stay here only until my father be laid in his grave. You will see I shall spend my life here, not there."

I could hardly credit this, and tried hard to reassure the poor girl; but she was right. Her father lay for months in his grave, the period of mourning

was long over, before there was any hint of Fáthmá's going "home." But she did at last set off to the distant village in which he lived; and as Zahibunissa had also gone away, my visits to the Bai Saheb's rooms ceased for a time.

* * * * *

"Fáthmábi is home again," said another pupil in the house one day; "they say she is very ill."

I called at once. A woman whom I thought a stranger rose from the bed and put her hands in mine. I drew her towards the light. It was Fáthmá, developed from a drooping, spiritless girl into a crushed and heart-broken woman. She had no tears now, no interests, no life. Looking into her eyes that morning, I found myself asking sadly, "Is it possible that hope has given permanent place to despair here, and this girl not more than seventeen? It cannot be." I bent all my energies to rouse her. She never named husband or home, nor did I; and to this day I do not know how the weeks of her absence had been spent. But, ignoring her listlessness, I strove to interest her in books and work, and in the little life which would one day come to her as her very own, and for the sake of which she must live and even be careful of herself. She tried for a time to carry out my suggestions; but her mechanical efforts were more painful to

witness than the inertia which had now become natural to her, and at length I ceased to trouble her, trusting that nature would do what friendship had failed to do. But I visited her room constantly, leaving little hints of a "very present Help in trouble," or of a life beyond this where sorrow and sighing are unknown.

* * * * *

A silent house aroused my dread one morning, and I called at one of the other doors to inquire for Fáthmá.

"Her baby was born last night. I believe she is asking for you," was the reply. Taking off my shoes, I slipped quietly into the room. Fáthmá turned when she heard me, and her look and smile nearly broke my heart. I knelt down at her side.

"You are not very ill, are you, dear?"

"Oh no,—I am not made—of the kind—who die. —I wish I were!—But my baby will die.—I have known it all along.—I am glad.—She is a girl."

The words came in broken, gasping phrases, and I turned away to look at the child.

"Let me see her in your arms," whispered the mother.

I lifted the tiny creature. An ordinary doll would have weighed more in my hands, and many a doll is larger. But it was neither the size nor the

weight of that smallest morsel of human life I had ever seen that filled me with awe, and caused me to lay her down and hasten from the mother's sight.

The little baby's face was very beautiful, her features very perfect. Silky black hair shaded the tiny forehead, long eyelashes and eyebrows lay like finest pencillings upon the soft skin. I never saw so lovely a child. But the heritage of an anguish which had proved to herself unutterable had passed heavily on from mother to infant, and had left its sign in the most piteous, weary, heart-broken countenance I ever saw. It haunted me for months; it haunts me at times to this day.

It was a relief to hear on the next day that the little baby was away, taken gently from the burden which weighed down its tiny life. I think her mother was glad too. At all events she expressed no sorrow. She even listened with some show of interest to the words of Him who called and still calls to Himself the little children.

* * * * *

Fáthmá's story is one of unmitigated sadness—sadness the deeper that words cannot tell it, so that its secret can only be dimly guessed at.

But may it not be well for us who live in comparative light, now and then to lift the veil which hides from us the darkness and mystery which

surround the lives of too many of our fellows? We cannot—oh, how helpless we are!—penetrate the darkness or unravel the mystery. Only One can do that; but we can surely bend all our efforts to let in a little glimmer of light, or to stretch out into the darkness the hands of sympathy and of love.

THE MERCHANT'S WIFE.

As I was leaving the Bai Saheb's rooms one day, I noticed far along one of the galleries a purdah held aloft and a hand beckoning. As no other person was in sight, I conjectured that this silent call was addressed to myself, and walked along towards the door.

"At last you have come," said a cheery voice. "How often I have watched for you and made signs to you, and you never saw me."

"No, I never saw you. I am very sorry. But why did you not send for me? I am often in the house. You could easily have come yourself to the Bai Saheb's room, for instance, and fetched me."

"Do you not know the Bai Saheb yet? There are many of us who wish you would come and teach us, but we know the Bai Saheb will only let you go where she pleases."

"That is nonsense, lady. I go where I please;

and if you wish me to visit you, I shall be most pleased to come. Will you not gather all those who wish to learn into one room, so that you may learn together?"

"We never leave our own rooms, you know, and it would take you all day to teach in the rooms where we wish for you."

"Forgive me for contradicting you—you often meet in each other's rooms. I have myself daily seen ladies on the galleries."

"Yes, one or two quietly talking, you will see; but we should never be permitted to meet and learn in one room. I doubt whether your visiting in separate rooms would be long allowed to pass. Meantime all your pupils are friends of the Bai Saheb."

"Well, never mind that. You wish to learn?"

"Yes, if my husband will consent. I long to be able to learn."

"And I long to teach you," I said heartily, though, truth to tell, I had pupils enough; but there was something very wholesome and refreshing in this little woman. It was impossible to resist her.

"Here he is!" she said, hastily retiring behind a screen which divided the room. "You ask him to allow me to learn."

He was a good-natured-looking, plump, little man,

who, before I realized the change, filled the seat his wife had vacated.

"She has got you to see her at last, Madam Saheb," he said, laughing. "My life has been a burden these weeks past on your account; and to-day I came home early from my work to try to see you as you left the Bai Saheb's house, and to bring you to our poor room. I waited downstairs in vain until I felt you must have escaped me, and came up to comfort my wife."

Here *was* a good-natured husband!

"Your wife wishes to learn to read," I said.

"Yes, she has some notion of that sort. But what use in the world will it be to her? You English ladies are like men; you have men's brains"—nobody was present with physiological knowledge enough to contradict this statement—"but our women, they are only fit to sweep floors and cook dinners."

That this gentleman's wife fulfilled both of these functions well, the pretty clean room and his own comfortable condition amply proved. That her brains were equal to a heavier strain than these required she herself evidently believed, for from behind the screen came a little mocking laugh. I had enough ado to keep a serious countenance while I once more pled her cause, and eventually gained his offhand permission to "try" her.

"Try" her I did, and with such good effect that one day, not very many weeks later, I walked in upon the young couple; she being engaged in writing a letter for him, as being the swifter and more accurate scribe of the two.

> "Woman, whom custom had forbid to fly
> The scholar's pitch, the scholar best knew why"—

had, if a most expressive vulgarism may be permitted, "scored" once more!

AN OLD LADY'S TALE.

In a small back room of the old house I spent many a pleasant hour. The inhabitants were reckoned amongst the "poor relations" of the Bai Saheb, yet they had the rare art of making even poverty look comfortable. The beloved swing-bed hung from the roof; well-lined cushions and rezais were placed conveniently along the walls for those who preferred the floor to the swing; there was even an ancient chair for such as affected English ideas of comfort. Some gaudy vases and plates adorned the niches in the walls, which, if not in themselves æsthetic, lent a cheerful appearance to the room. The window was so high above the street that it could be kept wide open without any breach

of purdah privacy. In the window stood a little iron pail, to which was attached a long rope. When the cry of the beggar was heard from the street below, these ladies, like the Bai Saheb, let down a little food by means of this pail. The action was the same as the Bai Saheb's, the gift itself was probably much smaller, the motive which prompted it certainly was much purer; for here, in this little attic, dwelt charity of the truest and noblest kind.

They were four generations. The dear old great-grandmother, very frail and helpless now, but full of loving-kindness to all, gratitude for any little service done to her, and patient endurance of the suffering and weariness which are incident to extreme old age. Her daughter, and *her* son and his wife, and their four little ones, made up the family. They lived in perfect union, unless the gently-expressed reproaches which the young wife spoke to her mother-in-law and grandmother-in-law when they spoilt the babies be reckoned as a breach of it; but as she never could be severe herself, I think her reproaches were accepted as permission to repeat the offence the next time a woman came to the door selling sweetmeats or fruit. It was truly a restful home to visit.

The oldest lady was always a deeply-interested listener when the Bible-lesson was given, and often

supplied us with illustrations, either from the "traditions" or from her own experience of life, which helped to impress the lesson upon the minds of us all. I have often regretted that I neglected to preserve some of her tales. Only one remains, and it is quite beautiful enough to tell. We had been speaking of the shortness of time, and the folly of setting our hearts upon those things which perish in the using, and which, however precious to us, must one day be left to others.

"I heard long ago," said the old lady, "a beautiful story which illustrates that thought. May I tell it to you?" And here is the story as nearly as possible in her own words:—

"Many years ago, in a far-distant land, there lived a great and noble Sultan, who feared God and was merciful towards his subjects.

"One day, as he rode through the streets of the city, he passed a fakir, who sat by the wayside asking alms. And this was the fakir's cry:—

'What is kept is lost,
What is given is saved.'

These words struck the Sultan, who rode thoughtfully home to his palace, repeating them to himself. Throughout the day they rang in his ears,

and all night he lay awake pondering their meaning.

"In the morning he summoned his viziers and counsellors to his chamber, who were much astonished to behold the pale and troubled countenance of their King.

"'I have a question to ask of you, my friends,' said the Bádsháh; 'answer me truly. When I die, what will you give me to carry away with me?'

"The viziers stood speechless, thinking within themselves, 'The Bádsháh has gone mad.'

"After a pause the Sultan repeated his question. 'Ye answer me not. I ask yet again, When I die, what will you give me to carry away with me?'

"At last an aged courtier stepped forward, and falling at the feet of his King, said, 'O King, thou wilt be as the poorest of thy subjects; let not thy servants here live after thee, for they can give thee but a white linen cloth wherein to wrap thy body.'

"'And that is all ye can do for your Sultan?' said the King, gently raising the old man, and embracing him. 'Yea, ye are but flatterers that call all this wealth mine; now is the beggar the equal of the Bádsháh.'

"The scribes were then summoned with haste, and a proclamation was issued in the King's name, and forwarded to the remotest parts of his dominions.

It called to the King's palace on a certain date all those who were in great poverty or distress, that he might himself hear their complaints.

"'Truly,' said the scribes and counsellors, as they obeyed the command, 'our Bádsháh goes mad apace.' Yet no man dared contradict or reason with his Majesty, for his countenance was grave and troubled, and he opened up his designs to none.

"On the appointed day the palace was crowded with suppliants. The Sultan saw each, and from his own stores relieved the needs of each—house to the homeless, clothes to the naked, food to the hungry, gentle and kind words to the sorrowful. By evening little remained in the palace save the resting-place of the King and food for the evening meal; but his countenance beamed with joy and peace. As he sat, ere retiring to rest, with his trusted counsellors around him, he said,—

"'Ye have marvelled much this day; hearken now to me;' and he recited the words of the fakir by the wayside:—

> 'What is kept is lost,
> What is given is saved.'

"'And,' said the King, 'when I asked of you what ye would give with me to the other land, ye promised me naught save the shroud of the poorest.

Then, thought I, the fakir says aright; and be it henceforth my lot to earn the love and gratitude of my people'—and while his face shone with holy joy, he added under his breath—'and treasures in Paradise.'

"In the morning, when the counsellors came as usual to summon the Bádsháh to prayer, he lay, as they thought, in a peaceful sleep; but on approaching his bed, they found that he was dead."

THE HUSBAND OF THE BAI SAHEB.

There is a true appropriateness in thus designating the head of the clan which dwelt in the old house through which we have been somewhat aimlessly wandering; for truly, although the rightful king and lord over the family, he had, long ere I knew him, subsided into the meek and much-enduring husband of his wife!

I saw very little of him until he lay upon his death-bed, but what little I did see led me to the conclusion that, having been thrown back upon himself in any attempt to win the affections of his wife, he had, to use a common phrase, "turned religious," and had found, in carrying out many little forms and ceremonies, such solace as his nature required. For he was a simple soul, without even the capacity to

feel pain or need as his daughters did. That he had something like a sense of sin I discovered one day, when he sent for me to the bedroom where he lay very weak and ill. Not knowing what he desired of me, I made a few conventional remarks expressive of sympathy, and asked whether I could help him in any way.

"You will sit down for a little," he whispered. I brought a chair to the side of the bed and obeyed.

"I am very weak," he said, "very ill; I shall never be well again. And I am sad here"—laying his hand on his heart. "You pray for the girls, do you not? I wish to ask you to pray for me too. You pray always in the name of Jesus?"

"We do," I said. "And do you wish me to pray for anything in particular?"

"Pray to God to have mercy on my soul, and to forgive all my sins."

He was quite worn out with the effort of speaking, and shut his eyes, whilst I repeated two or three of the most simple messages of mercy. Whether he heard or not I never knew; I was never asked to see him again.

But to the very end he struggled to perform all the little acts of devotion with which he had striven to fill his life. I happened to know his doctor, who

complained bitterly to me of the difficulty he had in getting this patient to obey orders.

"He is the most obstinate old fool I ever saw," said the irate physician one day, meeting me upon the stair. "He is suffering much from swellings of the feet. These I bandaged with care yesterday, and left orders that the bandages were to remain as they were until to-day, when I should myself attend to them. To-day I found them removed; and was pretty sharp with the whole crew, as you may believe. What do you think the old chap said? He informed me quite calmly that his religion would not allow him to pray with his feet covered, and that the bandages must come off so many times a day. I mildly hinted that the success of my treatment depended upon the bandages.

"'If my life depends upon them, I cannot help it,' said he. 'Duty to God is before duty to myself.'

"'All right,' said I; 'but don't blame the doctor!'"

Poor old man, in such religious ceremonies had lain all his consolation in life, and in them he persevered to the last. During his long illness he performed every act of devotion required of him most faithfully, rising on the morning of his death before daylight to repeat his prayers, and then laying himself on his bed again to die. His history, so empty,

so useless, so childish, yet withal so punctilious and earnest, caused me many an hour of questioning. It was such a poor, feeble imitation of the service of God; yet was that weak old man walking according to such light as he had.

When dead, the Bai Saheb's husband became much more important than ever he had been in his lifetime. As head of the family he was awarded such a funeral as had not been seen in our city for years. As a saint, there was laid beside him in his grave a letter signed by all the male members of the family, addressed to God, commending the deceased to His mercy and goodness, and enumerating in full all the virtues and holy deeds of his life, which, I suppose, having hitherto overlooked themselves, his family feared that the Supreme Being might also have failed to see.

As for the Bai Saheb, she was a most exemplary widow to outward appearance. Yet even the death of the husband to whom she owed the position she held, and who had been her companion for so many years, failed to reveal the slightest touch of true feeling or sorrow. She would have missed her midday cup of coffee more than she missed her husband.

* * * * *

Such are a few of the glimpses of life which I

caught in passing out and in of the straggling old house. One more only I intend to draw out of the obscurity of that zenana; but as she literally did emerge from within those walls, I shall award her a chapter to herself.

RAHIMUNISSA.

A BATTLE FOR WOMAN'S RIGHTS.

RAHIMUNISSA was a widow, who had hitherto lived with a son in another city, and was come to pay a long visit to her relatives in the Bai Saheb's house. The first time I met her I saluted her as "Bai Saheb," so marked at first sight was the physical resemblance between the cousins. Five minutes later, wondering that even for a moment my eyes should have been betrayed into so great a blunder, I was tempted to apologize for it to my new friend. Later on again I discovered that the likeness was not after all so slight. True, Rahimunissa had that trait which the Bai Saheb lacked, which we term womanliness for lack of a better definition; but behind this my new acquaintance had more than her own share of the Bai Saheb's chief qualities, strength of will and decision of character. That the two women dreaded a collision was evident, for they rarely addressed each other

save upon the most trivial subjects. Possibly their wills had already clashed. I often wondered why Rahimunissa chose to live in an atmosphere which even an occasional visitor to the house felt to be volcanic, especially as she had a small income of her own, and was independent of the family. Probably this was one more instance of the strength of the patriarchal system; if so, it was also a very good example of its failure to secure a peaceful home life.

Rahimunissa had never, until she and I met, come into contact with an Englishwoman; and while she entered enthusiastically into our lessons, Bible and secular, her interest centred in the study of the position which Englishwomen occupy as free, educated, and independent, if so they choose, of marriage. Every opportunity of quiet conversation upon these points was seized; and as Rahimunissa was not a girl whose whole life might be ruined by discontent, but a middle-aged woman of independent means, I spoke to her with perfect freedom of the ideal which Christian women may set before them as possible of attainment—an ideal which includes independence of character and life, a sphere of usefulness which only a woman can fill, and freedom to choose that sphere for herself—in addition to those traits peculiarly womanly from which no true woman

will willingly part. Rahimunissa drank in such teachings with an avidity which amused me. That they were likely to have any practical bearing upon her life I never dreamt.

At this time I had great difficulty in finding suitable teachers for our zenana schools, and one day I happened to mention this difficulty in Rahimunissa's hearing.

As I was leaving the room she said, "Missie Bai, do you think I could teach in your school?"

"Ah, I only wish I could get you!"

"Well, I shall come. Give me the salary you gave your last teacher, to make up for the wear and tear of clothing, for I am not very rich, and I shall be so glad to try it."

My good fortune was almost too great to be believed, for in every sense this was good fortune. A *lady* teacher in our school would insure good accent, good manners, and eventually, no doubt, the confidence of a good class of people. Besides, this particular lady had, if I were not mistaken, the attributes of a good teacher—firmness, patience, faith in herself, a large amount of general information, a vast selection of tales, a motherly disposition, and last, if not a Christian, her opposition to Christianity had vanished. She had never allowed prejudice to govern her, and her candid

nature saw that, however difficult to accept, our faith had a living power in it. Altogether I was greatly encouraged by this unexpected offer.

I meant to be down at the school before her on Monday morning, for the lack of a teacher had made our unruly little creatures more unruly than ever, and none could quell their tumult save myself. Naturally I felt anxious that our new teacher, who by the way had never seen a school in her life, should not experience too great a shock on the very first morning. She had been beforehand with me, however. There she was, supreme already, the children sitting like little angels in their proper places, and the work evidently going on quite independently of "Missie Bai." I heaved a deep sigh of relief, and retired to other duties a happy woman, feeling that my troubles were past.

But I was reckoning without a great many factors which go to make up the sum of troubles and worries. The next day Rahimunissa told me that she feared there were difficulties before us in her home; for when it was discovered that she had actually undertaken to teach in a school, especially a mission school, the horror of the family knew no bounds. The whole of the morning had been spent, she said, in trying to persuade her to give it up. But the taste of independence which even that

one day had given her had been very sweet, and Rahimunissa declared to them and to me her firm determination to continue the work she had undertaken.

A few days later persuasion gave place to threatening, which had only the effect of arousing into action all the firmness and determination which had hitherto slumbered for lack of opposition. Step by step they goaded her on until the day when nothing was left for her save complete emancipation. But it was emancipation at the cost of home, and friends, and social and religious fellowship. I have the history as it occurred, page by page, in her own words, which are far more graphic and concise than mine could be.

"Missie Bai, I have been miserable until now. Surely you would never persuade me to give in to them? My sons are all grown up and married; their father—God rest his soul!—needs me no longer. What have I to do? Until I saw you I tried to be satisfied with books; but we crave more than books."

* * * * *

"And what have my family to say? They say none of our people have broken purdah before. Have I broken purdah? They say that I have food

and clothing and all that I need, and that it lowers the family that one of us should work. I say I am better for working. They offer to give me money if I would stay at home. Do they think my heart pines for rupees? I am now happy. I mean to stay with you."

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"Missie Bai, I am sorry to give you trouble; but I must find a house for myself and my old mother. Will you help me? The Bai Saheb tells me I must leave the house, and my son says he dare not keep me. I am sorry to give up his little children, but I knew this separation would come. I know my people; they are hard. Once, years ago, one of our men became a Christian, and I know how bitterly they hated him, and how they scorned his desire for friendship. They will do the same to me."

* * * * *

"They have now put me out of the mosque; and our people have had warning against receiving me into their houses, or asking me to any festival. This is the Bai Saheb's doing, and they will not dare to disobey her. I suppose she hopes to frighten me back to the house. I shall *never* return to her house; not for all she could give or withhold—NEVER!"

* * * * *

"Have you heard the latest? Some of the men

came to my rooms last night, and said they intended to take the case before the High Court. They really thought they could alarm me! Missie Bai, we shall let them take us up to court, and make them prove that according to the law of Islam a woman may not teach a girls' school. If they prove it, I shall give in. But they know better. The Bai Saheb may turn me out of her house, the assembly may excommunicate me from the mosque, my sons may weakly submit to their mother's being so treated: these things are in their hands, the law is not. Let them do their worst, but I am free."

* * * * *

So to this day Rahimunissa teaches in a girls' school. She is by no means a perfect woman, and, sad to say, all her knowledge has failed to bring her to the feet of Christ. She is as independent of Him as she has been of her family. Nevertheless, she knows that to Christianity she owes the freedom she sought and won; and surely we owe her some admiration for the gallant fight she has fought for "Woman's Rights."

THE SACRED BULL.

THE STORY OF A SITE.

Suggested by the Title-deeds of a Mission Schoolhouse. May 1, 1892.

FIFTY years ago! The scene is a busy one, for this is the high road leading from the heart of the city out to the sacred hill of Párwatti, with its many temples, its stately worship, its community of holy Brahman priests and beggars, its ancient fortress from the battlements of which the last of the kings, only a few years ago, watched the battle which snatched from him his kingdom, and forced him to flee ignominiously from his capital. Párwatti may be said to be the centre of attraction towards which these crowds of men and women—laden with offerings of flowers and rice, laden also doubtless

with a heavier, though unseen, burden of sorrow and suffering and sin—are drawn.

Of the busy multitude, however, not a few turn aside to a small wayside place of worship, where a cluster of temples is tended by a monastery of holy Gosavis. These saints (?) live in a small hut adjoining their more imposing places of worship, whose gilded domes may be seen from afar down the street, and whose richly-carved and solid blocks of stone will bear comparison with the workmanship of any of the temples upon the more famous hill without the city wall. Early in the morning do the Gosavis rise and tend their gods, after which, according to their courses, some wander through the city begging food or money from door to door; while others remain to receive the free-will offerings of the worshippers who perform their pooja at the shrines, and to bask under the shadow of their one spreading tree in the enjoyment of the leisure to which their sacred office entitles them. Very sacred, all but divine, do these saints in their ashes and paint appear to the simple people who throng to the little spot, and many rich offerings are devoted to the service of the temples in payment of vows, or in deprecation of the anger of the gods, not alone offerings of fruit or flowers or grain, but more valuable gifts of gold and silver. Thus it happens that one god has eyes of ruby, while

curious tales are told of gods and goddesses made of solid gold, who own ornaments to the value of many hundred rupees, amongst which is one necklace gifted to the little monastery by the king himself when, on the day he fled, he accepted its shelter for several hours, and was kindly treated in his distress by the priests.

A prosperous little community of sleek, well-fed, though naked and ash-besprinkled and filthy Gosavis in the heart of a thriving and religious Hindu community: what could be more suggestive of living on through many years to come?

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Twenty-five years ago! The same street still, and the same houses, yet in some subtle manner changed. The upper-storied windows are not now thrown wide open to admit the cool morning air; or if open, a screen is drawn across them to prevent the too curious gaze of passengers on the opposite side. And in place of the workmen in wicker and brass, and the sellers of garlands and other temple requisites, the curious click of the weaver's shuttle is now heard at every door; and within, upon rough looms, may be seen saris and cholis in blue and yellow and scarlet, of richest silk interwoven with heavy golden thread. These weavers wear a different costume from the basket-makers and brass-

founders, and speak another tongue, and scorn to wear upon their foreheads the marks of an idolatrous worship. The change has doubtless been gradual, but it has been sure. In this district the little temples are not now the fashionable places of worship; while a hundred yards below the little monastery there stands in its trim compound a neat, snowy-walled, square mosque, to which the weavers hasten at the hour of prayer to worship the great Supreme Being, who is so far away, so terrible in His justice, so awe-inspiring in His silence.

And the monastery bears the marks of change also; for at the door of the ruinous little house children are playing where no children were, and their toy is nothing less than the sacred bull who, upon his stately pedestal of polished stone, was wont in olden days to guard the door of one of the temples. The gilding is rapidly vanishing from the domes, slabs of carved arches and pillars lie carelessly around, and in the building once sacred to a Hindu idol a number of men are busily engaged in building up a tazia to the memory of Hassan and Hoosein, the grandsons of the Prophet.

At a certain hour each morning and evening a few Gosavis wend their way from some other quarter of the city, unlock the doors of the one remaining

temple, and perform their sad and heartless devotions before a god whose eyes of ruby have long since disappeared, and who would be much the better of a coating of red oil-paint; he has indeed all the signs of neglect. Hinduism has emigrated from the spot. Islam reigns in its stead. The temple and its grounds are now the property of Mahometans; and the title-deeds of the estate bear the curious promise that so long as any of the old priests survive, right of way shall be granted to them, so that the temple services may not lapse whilst a worshipper remains to perform them.

* * * * *

To-day; and it is May-day! What a picture of reawakening life does the very name suggest to one's imagination! Praise is its motto:—

"Mountains and all hills;
Fruitful trees and all cedars:
Beasts and all cattle;
Creeping things and flying fowl.....
Both young men and maidens;
Old men and children:
Let them praise."

The song of May-day here in India is set in another key; and sung, if sung at all, to the sole accompaniment of the dreary sighing of the wind through the dry and dusty branches of the trees. Life is in

slumbering mood. The "beasts and all cattle, creeping things and flying fowl," lie gasping in the compound; the singing of the birds is low. I stand at the window and look down the street; not a sign of life; doors and windows are closed; the familiar click of the weaver's shuttle as he works at his loom is silent; there are no children playing around the doors; they will not return to school to-day. I may take up my pen once more. It is the same street; these are the same houses, though doubtless the old men and women whose day is fading into darkness are the boys and girls of my last picture. A few steps beyond this house there still stands the tidy little mosque; while from the door beside me I look straight out upon the little group of ruined temples. The Gosavis' hut alone has completely disappeared. I sit at this moment upon the spot where it once stood, and am sheltered within a neat little building of brick, furnished with benches and tables, maps and black-boards. No hideous god here to be propitiated with costly gifts; no unknown Supreme Ruler to be worshipped from afar with fear and trembling. Yet prayer does ascend daily from within this house, for many shrill child voices unite in saying each morning, "Our Father, who art in heaven;" while above the gallery, in symbolic prominence, hangs a representation of One of majestic

mien but gentle countenance, around whom are gathered little ones, upon whose heads His hand rests tenderly.

What matters it that, as rumour insists, in digging up the foundations of the old monastery the workmen found and concealed a copper vessel containing the treasure of the old Gosavis, when we have the opportunity of offering daily to all, old or young, who enter the walls of our little house the priceless gift of a true Friend, who will yet be as "treasure trove" in many a home and many a heart? For this little building is dedicated to the service of Jesus Christ, and He will surely reveal Himself to many a poor, needy soul here. Surely the Lord is in this place.

A slow, feeble step has just passed the window, and I rise to watch a solitary bent old man, who, with a rusty key in one hand, and leaning heavily upon the staff which he grasps in the other, totters across to the door of the old temple, reverently unlocks it, enters, sweeps the abode of his god, performs his daily devotions, and then creeps away as slowly as he came. This is the last of the old Gosavis.

The call to prayer is heard from the balcony of the little mosque, its doors are thrown open, and a

few men quit their shuttles or their gossip, in order to repeat their heartless prayers before the unknown and unknowable God. But there is lack of life in the service; for the looms and the daily toil and pleasure are very real, and the Spirit-land is very vague and distant, a thought of dread rather than of joy or comfort.

And to-morrow morning, and every morning, in this little schoolroom will the story be repeated, so familiar and so beautiful, of Him who neither requires to be propitiated with offerings nor to be approached with dread, who says to all, "Come; I will give you rest."

* * * * *

We had a visitor a few days ago to our little schoolhouse. "Shall I venture upon a prophecy?" he said as he left us. "Some day this will be more than a schoolroom. It will yet become the Christian church of this district, in which those who have accepted Jesus Christ will meet for worship and communion." Who knows how near its fulfilment is the prediction? Fifty years ago—nay, twenty-five years ago—who would have prophesied that this would be Christian ground to-day?

I turn back to my May-day Psalm of Praise, and

resume its joyful chorus where I left off a few minutes ago :—

> "Both young men and maidens;
> Old men and children:
> Let them praise the name of the Lord:
> For His name alone is exalted;
> His glory is above the earth and the heaven."

MOSLEM PLACE OF PRAYER.

A MOSLEM REVIVAL OF RELIGION.

I SUPPOSE that human nature being the same all the world over, *religious* human nature, whatever the form of religion professed, must work more or less in a very similar manner. Thus Hindu, Buddhist, and Christian alike will be subject to seasons of coldness and formality, as also to seasons of more fervent devotion and higher faith. And what is said of the individual, as we of the Christian faith know to our cost, will equally apply to the community or to the church. Over churches and districts and whole countries there creeps at times

a wintry chill, which lowers the pulse, causes the life-blood to flow sluggishly, and deadens the nerve centres, until life seems all but extinct. Then comes a "revival," as we call it, which warms and quickens and invigorates the whole body. With those so-called religions whose life consists for the most part in outward ceremony and ritual I have too slight an acquaintance to judge how a "revival" acts; but I have watched with considerable interest several such occasions in Moslem communities. Some account of one of these may prove interesting.

Religious life was at a very low ebb with us, as might be seen at the hours of prayer, when the mosques and other prayer resorts which ought to have been crowded were all but empty, even on Fridays; when men and women alike were far too much occupied with their worldly concerns to do more than repeat a hasty prayer, if they even did so much when the "call" was heard echoing down the street at the usual hours; when, worst sign of all, there was no opposition whatever to the missionaries, who were allowed to invade the homes and to gather the children into Christian schools without let or hindrance. The few fervent spirits one came across shook their heads mournfully as they noted all this, and whispered to each other that

surely a day of judgment would come upon the faithless followers of the Prophet, for their sins.

This deadness to—shall I say—spiritual things was, I imagine, very generally felt over the land; for one heard of earnest Moulvis here and there preaching in the streets, and striving to stir up the people. Of one especially I heard, as I moved from house to house, whose preaching was with great power, and who was visiting all the larger cities of our Presidency. Later, tidings reached us that he intended spending some weeks in our midst, visiting in turn those quarters of our town where Moslems were chiefly congregated. At last he had arrived, and had been received with great honour.

Ere long the Moulvi and his work were the one theme of conversation amongst our pupils. His methods were those of a Christian evangelist. At certain hours he preached in the streets; during the greater part of the day he sat in the mosque of the district in which he was working, ready to converse with any who desired to see him more privately; while in the evening he preached again either in a mosque or in the veranda of a house: these services often being continued until midnight, to which strain upon their time and strength the people in their now awakened condition made no objection whatever. They flocked to hear him at

any hour he chose, and were greatly moved under his eloquent appeals and personal fascination. Of the matter of his addresses I gathered little, save that he bitterly condemned the rationalism which English secular education was bringing with it, pled earnestly for more *esprit de corps* amongst all true followers of Islam, and on every occasion sought to rekindle the religious sentiment and enthusiasm which had been so nearly extinct. It was not long ere he discovered our unobtrusive little mission, and his attitude towards it was very curious. He visited two districts in which we had zenana schools. In the first of these he was most uncompromising in his opposition. "A school for girls must be opened at once," was his command. "The influence of the missionaries is everywhere most pernicious; all over the land they are gaining influence over our people, and by gifts and promises weaning them from our faith. Let us keep the education of our women and girls in our own hands, and leave these Christians, with their unholy charms and their unclean food, to their own devices." Curiously enough, such tirades as these had little or no effect upon our work. In fact, in this district the Moulvi was hardly successful. The mosque was certainly crowded day by day, and there was considerable stir and some enthusiasm amongst the

people. Also a partition, consisting of very open trellis-work, was put up in the mosque boys' school, from behind which girls were now to be taught to repeat the Koran along with the boys. To this charming purdah arrangement, accompanied as it was by the promise of payment for attendance, a few little girls were attracted. But our fears for our work were disappointed: our best pupils heard the Moulvi preach all night, and returned to school in the morning. As the weeks passed we feared our adversary less, until at length one day we ventured to question the children as to their reasons for cleaving to us notwithstanding the Moulvi Saheb. "Because he said things of you which were not true," was the sturdy reply. The learned Moulvi had overreached himself.

But he learned wisdom by experience, as even learned Moulvis must condescend to do. He now migrated to another Mahometan district, where also we had a school, and once more snatches of his sermons were ringing constantly in our ears. But their tone was changed, and the burden of his message regarding Christian missionaries was this:—

"Ah, how sadly we Mussulmans have degenerated, that, with all our light and knowledge, we need Christians to come and teach us! We, who ought to be spreading the truth as did our ancestors of

old, are sitting idly still, and allowing these noble and good followers of Jesus to come from their land to teach not the heathen only, but us Moslems. Let us arouse ourselves, my brethren, from our lethargy, and open schools for our children, both boys and girls, and let us teach our women ourselves; and thus set free the good missionaries to teach idolaters and heathen. Let us show the power of our faith by sacrificing something for it."

The good Moulvi had touched the right chord this time, and we saw something of what a revival of religious enthusiasm may be. The impulse which the people received was immediate and powerful. Our schoolroom overlooked the mosque, and from its windows we were able to view the daily services. The number of worshippers grew, as it seemed to us, in a day, to a congregation far too large for the little building. Its compound became a marvellous scene. To its farthest corner it was crowded with a mass of deeply earnest men, standing, kneeling, prostrating themselves, as the various stages of their devotions demanded. One felt awed by the sight, even while its practical result touched us but too nearly. For here also a school was opened, and so eager were the people to relieve "the noble and good" missionaries of the burden of the education of Moslem children, and thus "to set them free to

go to heathen and idolaters," that in a day our flourishing little school was reduced to two infant class pupils!

The Moulvi was charmed with this happy result of his efforts, and now set himself to build up the work whose foundations had been so successfully laid. A great midnight meeting was convened, at which, as we were informed, "thousands" of men, women, and children were present.

The Moulvi made an appeal for funds to carry on the work. A schoolhouse must be built without delay. What were the people themselves prepared to do? The district was, he owned, a very poor one, and much could not be expected, but each family ought to do what its members could for the faith; and to encourage them, he, the Moulvi, held in his hand a letter from a wealthy gentleman whose devotion to Islam was well known amongst them, wishing them all success in their efforts, and promising that for every Rs. 100 raised by them he would add another. The enthusiasm of the meeting was unbounded. Men started to their feet and made offers of as much as they could give; women and children broke off their bangles and anklets, and laid them at the feet of the preacher; most touching of all, as costing effort, and being done after the excitement of the meeting was over, poor women went from

door to door grinding corn for a few coppers, to be given as their contribution to the good cause.

Underneath our windows the foundations of the new girls' school were laid, and we watched sadly the rising of the mud and brick walls; and the Moulvi went his way well satisfied with the results of his work amongst us, to set other missionaries free to work for heathen and idolaters, and to promote similar revivals of the true faith in other cold and lifeless districts.

Should we close our work? There was great temptation to do so. Yet we had weathered such storms as this, not so severe, perhaps, nor so universal, but quite as trying. Besides, was not our Master greater and more powerful than the false prophet?

"Do not close, Missie Bai," said our teacher, herself a Mahometan. "I know their school will not last; they will not have patience. Do not I know my own people?" So we devoted ourselves to our tiny class of tiny children, kept our schoolroom as cheerful as possible, and awaited the progress of events with what patience we could summon to our aid.

As the weeks passed, one after another of our old pupils returned to us; houses which had been closed against us were reopened; the mosque compound

became less and less an object of interest at the hours of prayer as the number of worshippers dwindled to the two or three old men who had ever been faithful. As for the little schoolhouse, its walls were there truly, but funds failed ere a roof was added; and when the rainy season came the mud walls gradually melted away, until nothing was left save a little heap of bricks and clay to remind us of the great "revival" through which we had passed but a few months before.

"Better," one day remarked the teacher already quoted, when speaking of this experience—"better, Missie Bai, to keep on with our religious duties quietly and steadfastly, trying to remember God every day, than to forget them and Him for months, and do all the worship of our lives in a few exciting days, only to live as we did before after the excitement is over."

Are there not Christians who would echo the wise remark of the Moslem woman, as I did, with an emphatic—

"You speak the truth, teacher."

KORAN AND BEADS.

A MOULVI'S STORY.

IT was after one of the very few occasions upon which our unpretending little mission appeared in public that this gentleman, Mr. Ahmad Hissa-muddin, first called upon me. He was a stranger in our city, merely passing through it, indeed, *en route* for the Nizam's Dominions, where he had relatives. Hearing that there was to be a gathering of Moslems in connection with one of the missions in the town, he decided to be present, and to hear what the missionaries had to say. Very plain words were spoken that day regarding our aims alike in schools and visiting, so that had there been any question in the minds of the people as to our true motives in coming amongst them, henceforth there could be none. Women and girls would be placed

in our charge with full understanding of the risk they ran.

This gentleman was, as I have said, present on the occasion, and on the following day he and another Mahometan friend, whose wife was a pupil, called at the mission-house. Both expressed cordially their interest in and sympathy with our desire to help their women and girls, and their assurance that we should have great success. After thanking them for their kind words, I turned to the stranger with the usual polite(?) questions: "Where do you come from?" "Where are you going?" and so on.

The replies to this catechizing formed one of those histories which missionaries and other workers hear so gratefully now and again, reminding us how little we know where and when and how the seed sown in the morning or dropped by the willing hand at evening time will find prepared soil and prosper. I give the story as nearly as possible in his own words:—

"Our home, ever since I was a little child, has been in the city of L——. My father died soon after I was born; but he left us a little property, and we had neither debt, nor anxiety about eating or drinking, clothing or shelter. My mother was a

very good, religious woman, and we lived together in happiness and peace until she died a few weeks ago. It is because I have lost her that I have left my home, and am travelling so far from my own country.

"One of the most vivid and happy recollections of my childhood is of an English lady, the wife of an officer I think, who found out our home, and used regularly to visit my mother. There were no zenana missionaries in L—— at that time; but this lady was a true missionary. She brought not only pretty fancy-work to teach my mother, she brought the Gospel also, and read it to us. My mother never said very much about this reading. She listened politely, as any lady would, but she never spoke in the house to me or to the servants upon the subject. She was always a silent woman, and died as silently as she had lived.

"But upon me, the young child playing at the lady's feet, and worshipping her for the kind words she stooped to speak to the fatherless child, all that she read made a deep impression. I listened to every word, and by the time that the lady left L——, when, as I fancy, I must have been seven or eight years old, I had vowed to learn to read as soon as I could, and then to get for myself a copy of the Gospel. My teachers praised me for my

quickness and interest. They did not know how strong was the child's motive in studying. I must read, so I felt, the whole story, parts of which had so laid hold upon my childish imagination.

"I was quite grown up before I got the book. Though there were by this time missionaries in our city, I never had courage to ask for a Bible, or to tell anybody of my eager desire to know its contents fully. I did at last buy one when on a visit to Calcutta, and since then it has been my constant study. I have read every part of it. I have compared it most carefully with the Koran; have turned up all the parallel passages in the two books; have compared the various parts of the Bible, the one with the other,—asking God all the time to show me the truth regarding the two conflicting revelations. First, I was convinced that we Moslems have been mistaken in supposing that the Bible has been tampered with since its completion; and then I saw that the whole taken together is *one* book, with *one* history, *one* thought, *one* aim, and *one* end. Therefore it is to me truth that all was intended to point towards Jesus the Messiah as the latest and the greatest of the prophets. Thus I came to believe, though it was very hard to believe, that He died, that He rose again, that—as that wonderful Gospel of St. John (Miss Saheba, I think that is the most wonderful book

that was ever written) puts it—He was the Word of God, the Son of God, the Light and the Saviour of the world. I have never all my life been a true Moslem. How could I be when my one childish ideal was a Christian lady? But since I began to study the Bible I have really been a follower of Jesus the Messiah.

"It so happens that I have never known any missionary, although I have been in Christian churches, and have heard preaching; but my friend here told me that he was sure you would be willing to read with me, and to explain the many difficulties which still remain. If you would do me this kindness, I should stay for a few weeks."

Thus on two mornings a week half an hour was devoted to reading with this most interesting inquirer. We gave him a reference Bible, and a lesson upon the ways in which references may be used occupied one morning. This opened up a new region of delightful study for him. A morning devoted to the titles of our Lord remains in my memory as one which was most helpful to myself, as also one spent amongst the Old Testament Messianic prophecies. And, as always, one learned lessons from one's pupil. On the first morning, when we had taken our seats in the front veranda

of the mission-house, with a small table between us for notebooks and Bibles, I proceeded at once to suggest what might, as I thought, be a useful method of study.

"But the Miss Saheba will not open God's Word without prayer?" he said.

I found that he had already great familiarity with all parts of the book. He quoted St. Paul as freely as he quoted the Koran. He could repeat from memory passage after passage of St. John's Gospel, from which he had gained most of his insight into the work of Jesus Christ. He had also formed a very definite ideal of what a "follower of Jesus" ought to be. Indeed it was here that he stumbled; for when I tried to place before him his duty with regard to confession of his faith in Christ if he really were His follower, the invariable excuse was that he would bring discredit upon his profession if he made it.

For a few weeks he remained with us, during which time he paid regular visits to the mission-house. Then a summons reached him from his friends at Hyderabad, who had begun to wonder at his delaying to go to them. He obeyed the call, and we lost sight of him. How often it happens thus with us, that promising inquirers disappear ere we have the joy of seeing them take

their stand openly upon the side of the Master who is appealing to them! We always have, however, or should have, the comfort of knowing that He can follow such where we cannot, and can lay detaining hands upon them even when they appear to be trying to elude His grasp. Still, such unfinished stories invariably leave a sense of dissatisfaction. We should like to know the end. But in this very thing lies the main difference between real life and fiction; and it is with real life that we have here to do.

THE DAUGHTER OF THE MOON.

IN all the long street was no prettier or better-kept house than that. I had looked longingly at it many a time, for, with its snowy walls, green shutters, and double-tiled roof, it presented the very ideal of coolness and comfort. There was another reason for my curiosity. Throughout the district—indeed I may say throughout the town—the name of the Chaudri's wife was the very synonym for perfect womanly beauty. She was the daughter of a pupil of mine, a poor woman named Chandbi,* and from childhood had been known by no other title (used first as a pet name, and later with reference to her unusual loveliness) than "Chandki beti," the Daughter of the Moon. Many had been the suitors for the hand of the girl.

> "From the four corners of the earth they come
> To kiss this shrine, this mortal breathing saint,"

was very much the tenor of Chandbi's tale when she

* A very common female name. *Chand* is the moon.

got upon her favourite theme, the offers she had received and refused for her "Fair Portia." At length came a lover—if one may speak of lovers in such a case—whose offer exceeded even her ambition. The wealthy and high-born Chaudri heard of the dowerless beauty, and commanded his mother to call and inspect the girl, and to bring him word concerning her. The old lady's report must have been satisfactory, for her visit finally decided the fortunes of the Daughter of the Moon, who was duly handed over, after a fortnight of lavish festivity, in which the whole neighbourhood were invited to join, to be the lady of the white house already described. Who would not have desired to be the heroine of such a romance? Still, my audacity did not reach the point of walking up to and demanding admission from the dignified gentleman in white, with magnificent gold-bordered turban, who was occasionally to be seen standing at door receiving and graciously acknowledg respectful salutations of all the passers-by.

Nevertheless, I had my eye upon that d my eye was rewarded one day whe small end window, a white chaddar was liberately; and when, in reply, I made s tle brown hand signalled an invitation. I om my garri with alacrity, and k

half-open front door. The master of the house immediately appeared, and cordially offered his hand.

"His sisters"—pointing to a boy seated at his lessons—"have been calling to me to call you these many days; but I said we must not trouble the lady. It is of your great kindness to come into my poor house."

Here I found an opportunity of expressing my admiration of the house; and, ignoring the fact that I was there by invitation, I asked permission to pay my respects to the ladies. So, after a few polite remarks on both sides, the Chaudri led the way to the inner apartments of the house. Having given a loud knock, he threw the door open, and, cautiously holding the purdah aside, he asked me to enter. There was a momentary scuffle, for in the semi-darkness it seemed to me that the room was crowded, so that they fell upon me [illegible] and when I came to my [illegible] Persian mat, with a bol[illegible]n, surrounded by a cr[illegible]wering as well as I [illegible] polite questions [illegible]? "How old [illegible]? "Why did I [illegible]? "Had I any [illegible]y did I

got upon her favourite theme, the offers she had received and refused for her "Fair Portia." At length came a lover—if one may speak of lovers in such a case—whose offer exceeded even her ambition. The wealthy and high-born Chaudri heard of the dowerless beauty, and commanded his mother to call and inspect the girl, and to bring him word concerning her. The old lady's report must have been satisfactory, for her visit finally decided the fortunes of the Daughter of the Moon, who was duly handed over, after a fortnight of lavish festivity, in which the whole neighbourhood were invited to join, to be the lady of the white house already described. Who would not have desired to see the heroine of such a romance? Still, my audacity did not reach the point of walking up to and demanding admission from the dignified gentleman in white, with magnificent gold-bordered turban, who was occasionally to be seen standing at the door receiving and graciously acknowledging the respectful salutations of all the passers-by.

Nevertheless, I had my eye upon that house. And my eye was rewarded one day when, from a small end window, a white chaddar was waved deliberately; and when, in reply, I made salaam, a little brown hand signalled an invitation. I stepped from my garri with alacrity, and knocked at the

half-open front door. The master of the house immediately appeared, and cordially offered his hand.

"His sisters"—pointing to a boy seated at his lessons—"have been calling to me to call you these many days; but I said we must not trouble the lady. It is of your great kindness to come into my poor house."

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eat food?" "Why were English people white?" "Was our country really so cold that an Indian could not live in it?" And so on to the end. Politeness demanded a similar catechism on my part, which chiefly consisted in questions regarding the relationship in which each of my hostesses stood to the others. The deaf old lady was Khatijábi's maternal grandmother, while the stout dame in green was the Chaudri's paternal aunt. The various babies ranging from three weeks to seven years of age were brothers or sisters, uncles or aunts, nephews, nieces, or cousins, paternal or maternal, the one to the other. In dire confusion I at length called a halt, saying that I should learn my lesson gradually; and it was while we were enjoying a hearty laugh over my mistakes that an inner purdah was drawn aside, and we became conscious of a new arrival. Until this moment I had forgotten the Daughter of the Moon, and it had not occurred to me that none of the women around me claimed to be the wife of the Chaudri. The lady in dark-blue framed in the doorway, holding back the purdah in an attitude so unconsciously graceful, recalled at once the romantic story; and before we had exchanged the usual polite "Live for ever," I knew that the hidden heroine of the many tales I had heard stood before me.

The Daughter of the Moon failed to fulfil my expectations. Notwithstanding the air of grace and dignity, suggestive of a noble and high-toned character, which one meets with occasionally even in a zenana, and which this lady possessed in a marked degree, I was at first considerably disappointed. There was much that must be read out of that face, as it were, before one could enjoy the beauty of its features. And while we exchanged polite commonplaces, I was reading as in a book, first, that which seemed to be the permanent expression of the countenance—a hungering, questioning, unsatisfied, very pathetic look; and then the effect upon her of my visit—displeasure with the happy group around me (who now, by the way, were silent enough), distrust of myself, and unwillingness to accord me a welcome. I also felt convinced that in receiving me at all, she was only obeying the command of her husband, not following any hospitable impulse of her own.

I need hardly say that this lady interested me more deeply than any of the genial women and girls who had been chatting so brightly a few minutes before, and that I there and then vowed to win the friendship and confidence of the Chaudri's wife. My first visit had lasted long enough, however, and I now rose to take leave.

"You will come and teach us?" shouted a chorus of shrill voices. I looked towards the lady of the house and waited.

"The Chaudri will be pleased if the lady will visit our poor house," she said softly, and with this very cold invitation I had to be content meantime. An hour was arranged, and I departed.

I now became a regular visitor at the white house, and learned to know all its inmates more or less intimately. The Chaudri, having been partially educated in a Christian school, was quite free of prejudice against Christianity, though he acknowledged to have got beyond all religion himself. "Religion is a good thing for women," he would say. "And I am not opposed to your faith; it is most beautiful, and to believe it can harm no one. You may make my wife and family Christians—if you can," this last being added in a tone which suggested that the task would not be an easy one.

Thus it came about that from the first I used great freedom of speech in this house. And the women were attentive and interested, all save one. As week after week passed, I was baffled in every attempt to reach the heart and sympathy of the Daughter of the Moon. Yet the more securely she shut herself against me, the more eager was I to take the citadel. Her unrest was so marked, its cause so

difficult to reach. Few Mahometan women have so happy a home as hers was. Though perhaps a little tyrannical, the Chaudri was a most devoted husband, and had but one wife. She had a bright young family of sons and daughters growing up around her; she was in perfect health; had no thought for the morrow's needs, no apparent cause for anxiety to act as a weight upon her spirit.

She was, as a rule, present during the hour I spent in the house, although she learned nothing, and evinced no interest either in reading or needlework. The Bible lesson she most emphatically disliked, and showed this feeling as openly as politeness would allow. This is a common experience with new pupils, and we have often to wait long for any change of attitude; and I was willing to wait in this case as in others, though growing daily more anxious to win the confidence of this reserved and, as I feared, sorrowful woman.

My journal notes increased interest in our more serious conversations as the year wore on. We read the Gospel by St. Mark; and as we slowly followed the wonderful Life—so very wonderful when heard or read for the first time—more than one of the pupils appeared to realize its personal and special connection. Controversy had been happily avoided; indeed, I had a shrewd suspicion that the one listener

capable of controversy was that one silent and apparently uninterested listener. Once or twice I fancied that she made a movement as if to speak; but she refrained, and held herself steadily in check.

Ramzán stole upon us. The usually lively house became quiet; the women rested and prayed and gossiped, missing the welcome diversion of the daily cooking. It was a grave circle which awaited me on my first visit after the fast commenced, although the quieting influence of the Chaudri's wife was for once withdrawn. I was told in a somewhat mysterious whisper that she was asleep.

"She will be very ill before the fast is over," said her sister-in-law; "she is far too particular. You have seen how religious she is, Missie Bai?"

No, I had never dreamed of such a thing. The lady bore no resemblance whatever to the ordinary portrait of a religious Mahometan woman. One never saw her with a Koran, nor at prayer; she never quoted the Prophet, nor related any of those innumerable traditions in which such women delight; the name of God was never upon her lips; she showed no disgust when the name of Jesus Christ was mentioned. Yet the thought being suggested that the lady's burden was her religion, it was as if the whole secret and mystery of her life

were laid bare before me. I almost shrank from seeing her again, and dreaded reading that which she had hitherto so carefully concealed from me.

She was present at the next lesson, however, changed almost past recognition. Thin and haggard were the features, most weary the attitude, and the eyes wild and questioning, as if they strained after some unseen object. Simple fasting had not wrought this change; surely she must be ill. She sat at a distance from the other women, and looked, I thought, rather wistfully at me. I gave to each her work, then crossed the room to her side.

"Ought you to fast?" I asked. "Are you strong enough to bear it?"

"It is a small thing to do," she replied; "only one month in the year devoted to God and to prayer."

"And do you find that it helps you?"

"That does not matter; it is God's command. Do you Christians never fast, Missie Bai?"

"Sometimes," I said; "but not for your reason, Bibi. Will you tell me why you fast?"

"God commands it; and then it is the least thing we can do. We have a year's sin to think of. Does your Jesus give you no command?"

"He speaks of fasting sometimes, but He leaves time and manner to ourselves. If we fast, it is not for any of your reasons."

It was most surprising to myself to be in close conference with the Chaudri's wife. Her reserve had melted completely. She had made room for me by her side; and when, in the course of our conversation, her sister-in-law approached us, she very unceremoniously sent her away. I now tried to explain the Christian doctrine of the forgiveness of sin.

"You speak of sin, lady," I said. "I feel sin too, and like you am afraid of it, and like you, too, would gladly fast to have it removed. But we Christians believe that only God's forgiving us *freely* will help us, and that is where Jesus the Messiah means much to us. He has showed us how to reach God."

She listened attentively but incredulously.

"It is a very easy thing your faith," she said, smiling.

"Do you think so?" I asked. "I think yours is much more easy. You and I are proud: we should rather fast and work and punish ourselves than take everything and give nothing. I found it very hard to become a Christian."

"But you, were you not born a Christian?"

"Oh no; nobody was ever born a Christian. Some become Christians when very young, and some only when they are old; but to be a Christian means to let Jesus Christ do all for us. So, you see,

to be a Christian is not just like being an Englishman or an Indian."

"That explains why you are not all alike," she said. "All take the name, but some only are the thing."

I felt that she had hit the mark, little as she knew of us, and answered sorrowfully,—

"You speak truth, lady; and the best of us are very far from what we ought to be. This is our constant grief."

"You must tell me more, Missie Bai, but not beside these chatterers. You will come some day when the fast is over and see me alone."

And so what I had longed for, and almost despaired of, came about. The door was now unlocked, and never quite closed again, although at some times it was more open than at others; for she very resolutely opposed much of our teaching.

"You are able to receive this doctrine," she would say; "my nature will not accept it. Your religion has much truth in it; but we are also people of a book, and our later revelation supersedes yours, as yours did the Jews'. God teaches by degrees. The Jews had God and sacrifices; Christians had God and Jesus the Messiah; Mahometans have God *alone*. Ours is the more difficult faith; but it is higher than yours, who have three Gods."

Once I tried to reach her through the place given to woman in Christianity, but was far from successful.

"God has given to man perfect power over woman, and it is easy to understand the reason. Are we not the greater sinners? did we not indeed bring sin upon man? The law is not cruel; it is just. If a woman be happy, and the mother of sons, she can only say, 'God is merciful.' If not, it is no more than she deserves. There will be far more women than men in hell."

At length she was persuaded simply to hear the story of Christ, which I read as usual almost without explanation. It impressed her deeply.

"Tell me what you Christians really believe about Jesus the Messiah," she asked one day.

"What does the Koran say of him?" I asked. "Do you think He was as the other prophets?"

"No, He was not."

"Bibi, did you ever hear of a sinless *man?*"

"No."

"Then what shall we say when we find a Man in whom even his enemies find no fault?"

She looked in my face in silence for several seconds; the question was to her a hard one, and her beautiful face was troubled. But if anything, the Chaudri's wife was candid; and she replied after that pause slowly and thoughtfully,—

"Yes, Missie Bai, He was different from the other prophets, being without sin; and He was more beloved of God—so beloved that God in a special manner called Him '*my Son*.'"

Further than this the Daughter of the Moon never came. Sometimes it appeared as if her heart yielded the adoration which her intellect refused. At all events, her opposition was withdrawn, and her life was softened and sweetened. The austerity gradually disappeared, and the true beauty of her character deepened the beauty of her countenance.

Of a deeply religious nature—a nature in which was much both of the ascetic and the mystic—one could not but hope that even when, as happened soon after the above confession, missionary influence was unavoidably withdrawn, the truth would lay hold upon her and draw her into a full acceptance of Jesus the Messiah.

KHATIJA.

KHATIJA was an irrepressible! She was a child out of a very miserable home, where poverty and quarrelling abounded. One would have thought, after a glimpse into its internal arrangements, that there was little in her surroundings to make life bearable, far less happy. One little hovel of a room held them all—opium-smoking father, irritable delicate mother, and three or four unhealthy-looking little ones. Khatija was the eldest child—head nurse, head cook, and head messenger. It must have been a very weary little body that lay down to rest at night many a time. Yet she never flagged,

never looked cross, nor lost for a moment the sense of humour, which was, as we used to tell her, the one intellectual gift which Mother Nature had bestowed upon her.

I confess that for a time I failed completely to understand her; she looked so bright and capable, while she made nothing whatever of her studies. In those days our encounters were not satisfactory.

"Khatija, could you not make your stitches a little larger, and your sewing a little dirtier?"

"Oh yes, Missie Bai," very seriously.

"Khatija, why don't you learn your lessons better?"

"God knows, Missie Bai; how should I know?"

The child was disappointed in herself, I think, and did not understand why she failed.

I set myself to study her. I visited her home and found out the nature of her daily life, and learned from her mother that the little drudge was an obstinate, naughty child whom nothing but beating would tame. That this was a mistaken reading of my pupil's nature I was assured, as also the suggestion of our teacher that she had no brains, and never would learn. So I watched and waited, and tried to win her confidence by giving her small duties which brought her constantly to my side. The more I saw of her the more I felt that here was a child who would never

be educated by the ordinary school methods; conventionality—even such as we have amongst our Indian children, and it is conventionality of the most unconventional pattern—she had none. She must be allowed to learn after her own methods; she must be led by invisible leading-strings; she must even, in consideration of the drudgery of her home life, be allowed to go and come pretty much as she pleased. Thus, as far as the discipline of a school would allow, I gave Khatija perfect freedom. This done, we found in her a most engaging and apt pupil.

What Khatija did not understand clearly she took leave to disbelieve or question; as, for example, when giving a very simple lesson upon the sun, and the motions of the planets, which the whole class accepted blindly upon my testimony, Khatija's sceptical look called forth the question:—

"Do you not believe what I have been telling you?"

The answer was a very expressive "Kl!"

It was at Bible lesson that Khatija shone. The stories told as past history one day returned to us upon the next as vivid scenes from the streets of our own city. Thus the Pharisee did not fast twice a week, but kept Ramzán as Ramzán ought to be kept; and if he did not give tithes like a good Jew, he fed the fakirs like a good Moslem. The good

Samaritan lived in the next street to ours ; he was, I believe, a native Christian, and had once spoken a gentle word to Khatija in passing. As for Dives, perishing of thirst, he prayed that Lazarus might be sent to his aid with "a *lotaful** of water."

"Did I tell you that, Khatija?"

"You said that the rich man wanted Lazarus to dip his finger in water, and touch his lips ; but what would that be to a thirsty man?"

After a lesson upon the temptations and seductions of our great enemy, Khatija solemnly assured us that she had seen him.

"When?" and "Where?" asked half-a-dozen voices.

"Hush! don't speak of it," said the child in an awed tone.

Later on I tried to learn from her what she meant by her statement; but she was evidently afraid to speak even in a whisper about the vision, and I learned no more than that it was at dusk one evening that "Shaitan" had appeared to her.

Khatija's masterpiece was, I think, at a geography lesson. We were engaged in performing a journey from our city to Edinburgh. Up to Bombay we travelled by rail ; took ship across to rocky Aden,

* Brass vessel.

and through the Red Sea, pausing to recall its miraculous story; we threaded the canal; sailed smoothly to Brindisi; traversed Italy and France *viâ* the Mont Cenis Tunnel; crossed from Calais to Dover; and thence to London and Scotland. The children were all intelligent; no particular escaped them; and they received both the canal and the tunnel with a steady if somewhat awe-stricken faith. When we reached Scotland there was a pause; then Khatija asked,—

"Is *that* your country?"

"Yes," I replied, while it occurred to me that Great Britain surely occupied less space than usual in our map of the hemispheres! "But," I hastened to add, "you see these patches of pink spread all over the continents? These are all parts of Britain. We long ago became too many for our small island, and have spread thus over all lands." But my explanation failed to satisfy; that small speck in that out-of-the-way north-west corner of Europe was all that could be shown for Great Britain, and Khatija somehow felt that she had been cheated.

"Surely," she said at last, "if your people can cut a land in two to let ships sail between, and can dig through miles of mountain for a railway, you might fill up some of the sea around your small country, and so make it look a little larger!"

I should not like to be too partial, but I doubt whether many children from the same poor class in Scotland would have produced so brilliant a suggestion from their unaided imagination?

I returned from furlough to find Khatija on the eve of her marriage. But she ran in to see me on the morning I paid my first visit to the school. Throwing her arms round me, and with tearful eyes, she began a loving greeting. But sentiment was not her *forte*. Jumping off my lap, she struck a penitential attitude, and said,—

"Missie Bai, we have grown wicked rapidly while you were away. You will have no time to teach now; your time will be spent in beating Satan out of us."

"Shall I begin with you?"

"Yes; but—I forgot—I am going away. I shall never be good any more."

Two or three quiet talks only we had, and then she also drifted, as so many drift, out of sight—never, I hope, out of memory.

A VISIT TO A TEMPLE.

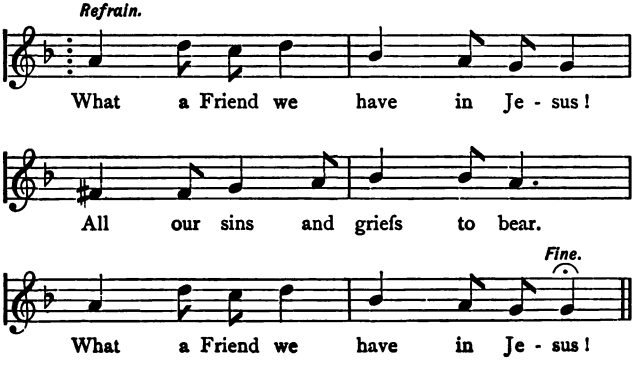
RAGHOBA was once a friend of mine, but I lost his friendship, and in place of profound salaams and cordial greetings when we happened to meet at the street corner or in the market square, he learned to scowl or turn his back upon me. By this changed aspect "hangs a tale," as also one of the most anxious half-hours I ever spent, as far as my own personal safety was concerned.

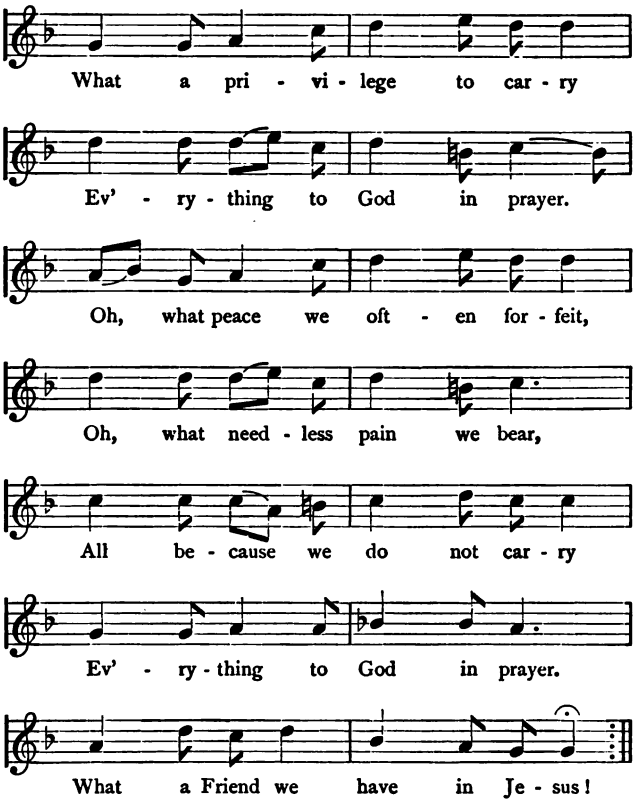
My acquaintance with Raghoba began on this wise. While I waited at the door of a pupil's house one morning to discover whether she intended taking her weekly lesson, I was accosted by a young fellow, who brought an invitation to visit the house of a Maratha Brahman a little farther down the street. "They have heard that you know their language," was the reason given for the invitation. Duly I presented myself at the front veranda of Raghoba's house, and was received with great distinction, al-

though I disclaimed at once any further knowledge of Marathi than consisted in being able to read a little and to sing a few Christian hymns.

"You must sing us hymns, then," was Raghoba's somewhat imperious request. I obeyed, and there, in the open veranda, with half-a-dozen men around me beating the floor and nodding their heads to keep time, and with a small crowd of men and women outside, attracted, doubtless, by the strange music and the unknown tongue, I sang an old favourite, "The Beloved Friend," and several other hymns as they came to recollection. The sentiments of these called forth no opposition; that was evidently lost in the pleasure of hearing the beloved sounds of the mother tongue once more in this far-away land.

THE BELOVED FRIEND.





When at length for very weariness of voice I ceased, the head of the family, whom I had recognized as "Raghoba," thanked me in name of all for my visit, and asked me to return soon; mingling

compliments upon my accent, with asides to the effect that Marathi was the only language fit for a gentleman, a sentiment which called forth unpleasant replies from the by-standers. I was then allowed to depart. Thus Raghoba's path and mine first crossed each other.

He was, as I ought to have said at the outset, a big burly Brahman, who wore no more clothing than was absolutely necessary, unless a pair of huge gold earrings be accounted clothing; and from whom, notwithstanding valiant efforts to overcome the feeling, I had an instinctive shrinking whenever I came into contact with him. This was at least once a week, for my Marathi hymns were in great request; and it became a habit to step into the veranda at a certain hour of a certain day to sing a little to the men, with, it must be confessed, ulterior designs upon the inner rooms where, behind the chicks, certain female figures were dimly visible. I had not yet got beyond the veranda, however, when my intercourse with the family was brought to a sudden and untimely end. This was the way of it.

One morning Raghoba, who was a very proud man, as all Maratha Brahmans are, told me that the impossibility of in any way repaying my kindness in visiting them—which visits had been the source of so much enjoyment to himself and his friends—had

been causing him some trouble. "We have been wondering what we could do to give you some pleasure in return. You would not care for a dinner, so we do not ask you to accept one; but it has occurred to us that you would perhaps like to see our temple and our god, so if you will go we shall be very happy to take you."

Most willingly would I have been excused from this "treat," but I was a young missionary, and not yet versed in the art of saying "no" politely; and so behold us, Raghoba and I, heading a procession of some seven or eight Brahmans, wending our way through by-lanes of our city, into which I had never penetrated before, to pay a visit to a Hindu idol. The temple proved to be a small, square, roofless building, consisting really of four verandas facing inwards. The shrine occupied one veranda, while the other three were evidently used as lounging places. I was conducted into the one opposite the shrine, where, hung from the rafters by heavy brazen chains, was a wooden swing, such as one sees in large zenanas. Raghoba politely asked me to be seated; and I obeyed, now fully conscious that the situation was a difficult one. Raghoba and his friends retreated to the two side verandas, whence they were able alternately to gaze upon their god and upon me. Then there was silence. The atmosphere of the

place was oppressive, I could hardly breathe; and it seemed to my excited imagination that the powers of speech and of motion were already failing under the evil influences around me. There, full in my face, was the little stone shrine, sheltering its shapeless yet fiendlike image, the only definite features of which were the great leering eyes standing out with horrible distinctness from the mass of red oil-paint and the garlands of sickly-smelling flowers. It seemed to me that those eyes glared at me with devilish pleasure in my horror; and I closed mine, unable to bear their fascinating gaze, and for the moment forgetful of the presence of the Brahmans.

It was Raghoba himself who first noted my closed eyes, and he said with a sneering laugh, which went far to make me gather my wits together:—

"Ah, the Mem Saheb prays. Christians always pray with their eyes shut. They are afraid to look upon their God; or perhaps they are afraid they will remember that He is not there at all, as He is not to be seen. Is it not so, Mem Saheb?"

"It is true that we close our eyes," I answered; "but you have not got hold of our true reason."

"And what is your true reason?" asked one of the men.

"It is because when we pray we desire to forget

the things that are around us, and to concentrate our thoughts upon the worship of our God."

"Tell us what you think of *our* god," was the next question. At that instant, as by a flash of pure heavenly light shed upon hell itself, a vision of the horrid sin, the cruelty, and the black darkness of this religion arose before me. Whatever came of timidity, I felt bound to speak God's truth to these men; and fixing my eyes full upon the hideous representation of their deity, I said quietly,—

"My friends, I cannot tell you what I think myself of your god. I can only tell you what is written about it in our Shastra:—

'Wherefore should the nations say,
Where is now their God?
But our God is in the heavens:
He hath done whatsoever He pleased.
Their idols are silver and gold,
The work of men's hands.
They have mouths, but they speak not;
Eyes have they, but they see not;
They have ears, but they hear not;
Noses have they, but they smell not;
They have hands, but they handle not;
Feet have they, but they walk not;
Neither speak they through their throat.
They that make them shall be like unto them;
Yea, every one that trusteth in them.'"

I rose from the swing and moved towards the door

in the dead silence which followed, and which seemed to me to last an hour; although it must have been no longer than two or three seconds ere those men had mustered the might of their fury, and hatred, and wickedness. These found utterance at length in a torrent of words which, fortunately, I only half comprehended; they did not belong to the vocabulary which a missionary is likely to acquire. Enough that they shouted out their hatred against Christians, their God, and his Christ; and vowed vengeance upon me if I lingered within the sacred precincts of their temple one instant longer.

The door was closed, and I stood until Raghoba came to himself so far as to open it; and the last thing I saw, as, trembling and hysterical I hastened away along the lanes towards the main road, was his countenance. I thought that at that moment he had taken upon him the very image and likeness of the god he worshipped—

> "They that make them ARE like unto them;
> Yea, every one that trusteth in them."

So ended my friendship with Raghoba, the Maratha Brahman. And yet, for years, I never saw a gate which resembled the gate of his temple, nor felt the sickly odour of the flowers which adorned his idol, nor even experienced the peculiar short

motion of a zenana swing-bed, without a shuddering sensation of dread and horror.

A little experience teaches that there are times for speech and times for silence; possibly silence would have been wiser on this occasion. Yet I have never regretted that for once those men heard stated in the plainest terms the truth about their abominable gods, and their own only too close resemblance to them.

A FAMINE ORPHAN.

"YOU will be much touched, dear ——, to hear that your old friend Shiwadi has gone home. He died two days ago."

Yes, these tidings affect me very deeply, not only because Shiwadi was a much-loved friend and correspondent, but because he was one of "our boys." How they come back to recollection, the miserable, half-starved little fellows, in many cases full of disease, who came to our door to be taken in, nursed, trained, and loved. One could write a volume of reminiscences—comical, some of them, as reminiscences of boys are sure to be; pathetic, too, not a few; and one or two, ah, so painful, in view of our apparent failure to bring out the good or to stamp out the evil in their natures.

Still, such reminiscences are only interesting to those who knew "our boys." To tell the short story of one of them will be enough, and I choose, as being

nearest my thoughts, this little lad Shiwadi, who has just "gone home."

His start in life was pathetic enough, for he was literally a waif. Motherless and fatherless, he and a small sister were turned out of their home by an unnatural stepmother, and left to their fate. One's brain reels at the bare thought of the thousands of unwelcome little ones who wander, loveless and homeless, in our hard, cold world. Some find shelter and home, whilst others—! God forgive us that we ever sleep or eat without a thought of them!

This little brother and sister were of those who found resting-places, the boy with us, the girl in a similar orphanage.

Shiwadi was a mite of a child when he came amongst us, and probably owing to early hardships he never grew as some of the others did. To the end he was considerably under the average height. His mental powers developed rapidly, however, and he was a capital scholar all through the usual school course, and served a very satisfactory apprenticeship to his trade—that of printing. In addition, he had a wonderful voice, a clear, true, ringing treble, which developed into a very sweet tenor. He loved to use his voice in sacred song, or in any department of our religious services; and it was in connection with his singing that I first caught a glimpse of the

spiritual change which came over him later on. A special effort was being made to reach educated men in our city by a series of Sunday afternoon addresses. As a help to the speaker, a small choir went down to sing a few hymns, and of course Shiwadi was one of us. Standing at my side, he sang with an expression and feeling which I had never before noticed the words—

"In the Cross, in the Cross,
Be my glory ever."

I glanced round and saw, as one now and again does see, the countenance transfigured by the joy of the soul. One almost envied the fresh, young nature accepting the mystery of the Cross so joyfully, and singing its power so sweetly. But I am anticipating.

In his earlier school days his moral growth by no means kept pace with his mental progress; and for long, while really the head of the school and our best boy-printer, he showed no signs at all of development on that side. He was a rough almost coarse boy, with whom no familiarity could be allowed; and we often doubted whether in any true sense he would requite the care and training he received. An unusually serious misdemeanour proved to be the turning-point of Shiwadi's life, for his offence

was one which was punished by expulsion from the school; and to our great sorrow he left us. It was a corresponding relief, after a time, to find signs of true penitence in his attitude and life; and the usual rule never to receive again into the establishment a boy once expelled was departed from in his case. He returned to us completely changed in every respect, and from that day never caused us a shade of anxiety.

There came a certain dignity into the small figure which rarely means less than a moral uprightness that has faced the tempter and vanquished him; his countenance became serious and even attractive, his manner gentle, his character blameless. In due time a good situation was found for him in a large public printing-office in Bombay, where he soon became a trusted "hand."

His earlier letters had a touch of sadness in them. He pined for his home and his old companions; but when manliness and independence were urged upon him as *duty*, he made a vigorous effort to overcome home-sickness, and succeeded to a great extent. For two years he remained in Bombay, when the disease so fatal to such as have had an uncared-for childhood—decline—seized him, and he was brought home to die. After a fortnight of patient suffering, during which time his words were very few, he slipped quietly away.

"Shiwadi, is Jesus with you?" he was asked on the night before he died.

He gently moved his head, and murmured, "Oh, yes."

On the evening of the day he died he was lovingly carried to the grave by his old companions, where, with others who from our native church have gone to rest, his tired body awaits the glorious resurrection which has been promised to those who sleep in Jesus.

During the two years of his absence in Bombay Shiwadi corresponded very regularly with his old teachers and companions. Such letters as gave glimpses of his inner life were carefully preserved; and although the broken English does not convey his meaning very clearly, some extracts will, it is hoped, be interesting.

"I received your letter of the 7th. Its thickness astonished me much, until I opened it and found the portrait of my childhood's teacher and dear friend, who has, since I saw her, been all the way to the Scotland and come back to us again.....It is very hard for us to think that the air of our land makes our father and mother [the missionary and his wife] and our dear Missie Bai so thin and white.

That God may keep you well, and looking like this photograph, is my true hope and prayer.

"Bhaga and I are attending church service regularly. I am very glad to say to you that I do not forget my Bible-reading and prayer. Every morning and evening I am doing this gladly. Many young boys are not doing this when they are far away from their kind masters and rulers, and of course they are becoming Satan's children. And I have seen many young boys in Bombay who are heartily fond of earthly pleasures. I thank God He has kept me far from such things. And I say now for myself with no doubt, 'I am my Lord's, and my Lord is mine.' And also I am glad to do his work all my life. Surely goodness and mercy *shall* follow me in all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in my Lord's house for ever and ever. Of course it is not easy for young boys such as I to say such words, because whole life is full of the temptation. But I am sure I can say such words, for I know God is faithful, who will not allow me to be tempted above my strength, and He makes the way to avoid the temptation. And why should such precious words be difficulty [to believe]? What shall I write now? It is easy to spend the time in writing, but I must mind the time of your work, not to lose it in reading my letter. This is the report during the

time of your absence in Scotland, and I hope it will be a 'good tiding' for you.—Your most obedient and faithful schoolboy,

"SHIWADI."

"——'s visit was very profitable and joyous for us. But it was strange (for my part) that —— says that young men must go to their own church only, and help in the work of God with their own workers only. I think it is a thought of selfishness. All workers and churches are of one true God and Saviour, and therefore all Christian men must help to one another in the work and in all else.

"I am trying to do the work for my Master, and I am sure my Master will help me."

"I greatly desire to study more of the Bible at home. There are some hard sentences and verses which I cannot understand,.....but I know very well that by the grace of God fears that come like mountains will disappear like straws.....I will study more and more of this divine book, and my Lord will surely help me to understand His wondrous things. Glory to His name for ever and ever.

"I am exceedingly glad and thankful for the book you sent me. I began it very joyfully, and I know that God will help me to understand it."

"During this week my one friend died from fever. He was very joyful, and died a true Christian man. I think I must be a catechist, and I hope to begin to speak this month by the grace and help of God. I am sure He will give me power and strength. I did promise to do this at the new year, and I pray that God may strengthen me for it."

"I am quite ready to do work for God, but have not tried yet; but *I will* speak for my Master in this week."

"I pray God that the boys that go off from you may not fall into evil ways, but become true Christians. May God make them fit for His service."

"Our work goes on well, and more work than enough. For this reason I can undertake nothing else.....

"Through our letters we meet, and I thank you much and truly for your helpful words. But I do not wish to give you trouble in writing to me. When you really have time, you will do me the kindness to send a little letter—*as little as you like.* —Your obedient schoolboy,

"SHIWA KESSOJI."

MY DISCIPLINES.

THIS was the name by which they were named in our house, those four or five men who appeared at the front door at all hours of the day and asked for "Missie Bai." They were the colporteurs, who carried Bibles, Testaments, Christian school-books, and tracts through the streets of the city and out to the neighbouring villages, selling them as they could at the nominal prices charged by our Bible and Tract Societies, and earning for themselves a very small commission upon the very small sum made. At this time I had charge of the work carried on by the colporteurs, my duties being to distribute to them the books for which they asked, keeping a list of them, and to receive an account to the last farthing,

A COLPORTEUR.

or rather "cowrie," of the moneys which passed through their hands. The transactions were very small indeed, and not a little intricate to these unlettered men: for example, some tracts would be priced two pice (about a farthing and a half), some at two and a half, and some at three; of the whole price of these books three-quarters came to the Society, and one-quarter was returned to the colporteur as commission. The computations were often a "discipline" truly, for I had not only to satisfy myself of the correctness of these infinitesimal accounts, but had to satisfy my men of their correctness also. This had often to be done after the fashion of an object lesson by ocular demonstration, a process which might have proved entertaining to a by-stander, but became from long practice rather monotonous.

They were good, simple souls all of them, to whom time was no object, and who very naturally wondered why it should be an object to me or to anybody else; and they tried my patience sorely many a time by appearing at the most unseasonable hours to demand books to the value of, perhaps, three farthings, which, as I used to say, did not pay. One attempt I made to free myself from bondage, when I engaged to sit in the office for one hour daily, during which hour all business would be

transacted, and after which office would be closed. This arrangement worked well for a short time; but one sad day Poonaji appeared out of hours. He required a Bible, and pled that he might lose his chance of selling it if it were not given to him, which would be a loss both to the buyer and to himself. I relaxed my rule and brought the Bible. On the following day, for an equally urgent reason, Rewaji got a couple of tracts; I also relieved him later on of some money which he feared he might lose; and on the third day resumed the habit of going to the office when called for, now impatiently, and again with the resignation of a martyr, but always going, which was all that my Disciplines required of me. Thus had they earned for themselves the title by which they went in our family circle.

Perhaps of all my Disciplines the one whom the designation most accurately described was an old man named Bappuji. He was too frail to go about the streets, and had been set up in business in a very small shop in the heart of the city, where, amid many discouragements and some persecution, he succeeded in doing a little work. He was a good, simple creature, as true a follower of Jesus Christ, I am sure, as any member of our native church. I fear

me his goodness and sincerity were many a time lost upon me on reckoning day; for if the others were not brilliant arithmeticians, poor Bappuji's methods of calculation beat them all. He was so honest that he used to arrive bearing a large canvas bag, in which lay every selfsame copper which had come into his hands during the month. On one occasion I think I counted two hundred and fifty, and then tired of the effort before I had nearly finished the heap! In vain I entreated that when sixteen annas had been reached he would exchange them for a rupee, and thus relieve us greatly. Bappuji did not see the force of this suggestion; and I had to resign myself to sit upon a low stool, counting out the dirty coins which he had deposited in a heap upon the floor. Nor was this all. That so many tracts at a third of a halfpenny each had been sold would have been quite sufficient information for the Society, but not for poor Bappuji, who was nervously anxious that each tract should be named, priced, and entered somewhere.

"But, Bappuji," I would say impatiently, when pressed for time, "cannot you tell me the whole number and value at once?"

"Missie Saheb knows that Bappuji is a silly old man, and can't count," would be the answer; upon which I would try to be resigned, return to a gentler

tone, and allow the old man to wander at will through the long, unnecessary lists of booklets.

As I grew more intimate with Bappuji, however, my own feelings towards him grew very tender and loving. One or two momentary glimpses caught in passing, of the inner hidden life, revealed a close walk with God, a calm and heavenly frame, which at first were hardly seen behind the little traits which had so often annoyed me. More and more I recognized that he was taught of the Spirit, and that I might well sit at his feet and learn from him lessons of simple and unswerving faith. His literal interpretation of the words which, by the help of two pair of spectacles and with laboured effort, he spelt out, often threw light upon passages which might have seemed mysterious to others; while his joyful acceptance of any promise he reached, as really there *for him*, was a beautiful thing to see. Many a lesson he taught me on the mornings on which I went down to the little shop to take stock, and many a time I curbed my impatience over our slow progress by getting him to tell me what he had been reading or thinking. One of these mornings, a hot, trying morning it was, I remember very specially. Bappuji was unusually slow, and my nerves were unusually on the alert. I hovered

for a while on the brink of irritable words—the feelings were there, active enough!—until at length, duster in hand, I sat down on the top of the ladder from which I had been reaching down books from the higher shelves, and said,—

"Bappuji, I am very tired this morning, and must rest for a little. Tell me what you have been thinking of lately."

"O Missie Bai, I am a little child. I do not even understand much. What can I tell you?"

But when I pressed him, he sat down on a bench, and, looking up at me, began the story he had told me before of the way in which Jesus Christ had won his love and then his trust; how, though he had never been able to count upon a penny more than sufficed for the day's needs, he had never lacked; and how he was able now to trust for his own old age, and for the wife and children whom in the course of nature he must leave soon.

Then he spoke of the people of his race, passing and repassing the door of his little shop day by day, as yet without even the knowledge of God; how we could trust them to His mercy until they did hear; and how assured he was that India would very soon be won. A pathetic little word about his own childishness and uselessness, and the weakness of any

word he spoke for Christ, was very soon thereafter to be tenderly recalled.

Bappuji ceased as he spoke that morning to be an ignorant, trying old man; he was my teacher in that lesson of all others most hard to learn—of unquestioning trust in the love and goodness and knowledge of God.

"Tell me your favourite text, Bappuji," I said, beginning to dust the shelf with renewed vigour. "Have you one?"

"Yes, Missie Bai; one that just suits me. I learned it long ago: 'It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord.'"

It will not be wondered at that after that morning the old man was glorified into one of the saints with whom to converse was a privilege and joy. It was not for long. Not many weeks later he passed gently away into the presence of the Friend whom he had loved so well, after so short an illness that none of us knew of it until he was gone.

The news of his death was brought to our door by a young man belonging to a native Christian family. With tears of which he did not pretend to be ashamed rolling down his face, he said,—

"Bappuji, the old man, died during the night. I am glad he has gone home; but he was the dear

friend of our family. His words and life brought my father and us all to believe in Jesus."

This was indeed news to me, very touching news; for the dear old man had never told me that he had really served Christ in bringing others to Him. So the lesson Bappuji taught us in death as in life was this,—

"Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones."

OUR FOUR FIRST PUPILS.

SAIDANI.

I WAS very tired, having wandered up and down the streets of the city all that long, hot morning in search of an "open door." But the doors were all shut, nay locked, or so it seemed to me. The district was a most suitable one in which to work, and I had come out to search for many things—some zenana pupils, an airy room in which to open a girls' school, children to fill the room when found, a woman to gather them, and a teacher to teach them. Not one of these wishes had been fulfilled. The sun's rays grew more fiery, my head ached, and my spirit was depressed. I must go home unsuccessful.

I turned a corner, and my eye fell upon a group of small children who had gathered around one rather older than the rest, and were listening intently to her graphic description of some scene or occurrence. She was dressed in a thin red muslin sari, with hideous yellow wavy lines crossing it diagonally. Her ornaments were of the cheapest description, her hands and face were far from clean, and her hair was matted and untidy. The general impression, received almost unconsciously, was of poverty and neglect. The conscious impression was one of sparkling eyes, a most attractive and intelligent countenance, and a vivid imagination. For how she did enjoy her own story! The lithe little figure was not a moment at rest; the hands and arms moved gracefully as if enacting again the scene she described; the face expressed as plainly as the words the various emotions which her story excited; the shrill treble voice rang out clearly and sweetly too. I was simply fascinated. Fiery sun and throbbing head were quite forgotten, and quick as thought I was in the centre of the group.

"What is your name, dear?"

"Saidani."

"Would you not like to learn to read?"

"Yes," very promptly.

"Well, I should like to teach you. Do you think we could find a room for a little school?"

A moment's thought.

"Oh yes, I know. The mother of Mariam has a room, and Mariam would learn too. Would you like to see it?"

We moved on, Saidani leading the procession; for her former listeners and a dozen or so other bairns (who had gathered as children seem instinctively to gather when there is anything unusual going on in the street) followed to see the fun. The room was not an ideal schoolroom by any means, but "the mother of Mariam" was willing to give it for a consideration. She had also a poor relative who would gather children. Mariam proved willing to be enrolled a scholar, and the following morning was appointed for the opening of the school.

The opening was duly accomplished. Saidani had been busy. The room was swept; four pupils had been secured; a hint regarding the use of water and a comb had been acted upon, for the face shone and glowed, and the hair had been oiled and plastered down over the temples. The alphabet sheets were distributed, and received on Saidani's part with a hearty kiss, and school began.

School began, and it grew. The little room held four children, but it would not accommodate

twenty. Saidani shook her head over the heat, kept the others from crowding upon me, fanned me vigorously with an old punkah, and at last said, "We must have a new school." So there was a flitting, and again another flitting, and at last—but I am anticipating.

Of course it was not long before Saidani's home life and circumstances were well known to me. She was the youngest child and only daughter of a poor, hard-working man. Her mother had died in her infancy, and the child had had very little care or attention from father or brothers. By the time she came to school she was housekeeper and cook and general servant all in one, and her life had little play or enjoyment in it. Before long, however, a strong affection arose between her and her teacher—a friendship which was a joy to us both. I found in her an unusually bright and faithful pupil. Her place in school was never vacant, her lesson was always prepared, her slate always clean, her welcome always loving. Home duties were got over in the very early morning, that father or brothers might have no cause for complaint. The schoolroom was her special care. She proved a rigid disciplinarian when placed in charge of the younger children. She was the very life of the little institution.

And how she laughed! Her sense of humour

was most vivid. Long after all other faces were grave, her voice would be heard behind her slate in little peals of laughter.

"What are you laughing at, Saidani?"

"At that dog."

"Which dog?"

"The one that let the real piece of mutton go, and shut down his teeth upon its shadow."

Saidani was proud, and could not bear to fail in anything which she undertook. On one occasion, after several days' holiday, she was asked to recite a poem for the benefit of a visitor. To her own horror and my surprise she broke down.

"That is not like you, Saidani," said I.

"Well, if people will shut up school, what can we do but forget?"

In time, thanks to the kindness of friends in Scotland, we were enabled to search out and procure a piece of ground, and in due time a neat little building arose in which the school found room to expand. In all the work Saidani took an intense interest, and great was her rejoicing when the hired house was vacated and the last flitting was over. By this time she was the last of the original four pupils.

"Do you remember," she said, "how you spoke to me on the street? And then what a funny little school we had! You sat on a little stool, and we

all sat on the floor, and we learned '*alif, be,*' and 'O God, Thou knowest me.'"

Yes, I forgot nothing; and as I drew this dearest of pupils to my side, I felt that Saidani all unconsciously had been the door leading to this pleasant, bright schoolroom, which would be in the days to come a centre of light and blessing.

Saidani was not given to unveiling her deeper thoughts and feelings; but she loved her Bible lesson and the hymns, and read the gospel story with reverent interest. And she steadily fought against any proposal of marriage, knowing that this would end her connection with her beloved school.

Ill health compelled me at last to take furlough, and sad farewells were exchanged.

In a month or two painful news with regard to Saidani reached home. Her brothers, walking along a street, had overheard two women speaking of their sister.

"She is a Christian," they were saying.

"We must get Saidani married, and away from that school," was their decision. And ere long a most suitable offer reached them. The suitor wished an educated wife, and was willing not only to waive the question of a dowry, but to pay down so many hundred rupees, to settle upon her a house which he owned, and to throw in any amount of jewellery.

Could so generous an offer be rejected for the very inadequate reason that the man had already a wife and children, and that Saidani wept, and prayed, and refused to eat? The thought was absurd, and the girl's nonsense was not to be tolerated. The marriage was hastened, the price was paid, Saidani was handed over duly, and the whole transaction was comfortably concluded. And it did not matter —why should it matter?—that in her new home the bride sat pining away, lonely, and sad, and uncared for.

In due time I returned, but was never allowed to see my old favourite, and so there is nothing more to add. Perhaps we shall hear the end of the story some day.

ASAHEL.

THIS was not his real name, although it was the name by which he was known amongst us, and it will serve our purpose as well as another while we try to tell his tragic story.

He was only a servant of the mission, a chaprassi or message-boy; but he was of good caste, was respected by his own people, and—highest qualification in a chaprassi—he was, as his name implies, "light of foot as a wild roe," and he turned not to the right hand or to the left from following that which he had undertaken to do. Alas, too, his end was as tragic as was the end of the lithe and graceful young son of Zeraiah, whose name he had borrowed.

Asahel had his little weaknesses, as other men have, but in the main he was a valuable servant, faithful as Indian servants go, and useful in many directions. He could be trusted with money or goods

to any amount, or with the charge of the girls of our boarding-school when out walking, or going through the noisy bazaars on their way to church. When thus "in charge," Asahel showed to great advantage, and he knew it. He then appeared an inch or two taller than at other times, he flourished his staff bravely in the face of any rude fellow who approached our ranks too nearly, and testified his devotion many a time by the use of stronger language than was at all necessary towards any inoffensive bazaar coolie who in the crowd was jostled up against us. Perhaps the idea may have passed through my mind that he did "protest too much." I had only one occasion, however, of really testing Asahel's valour or his capability as a protector. To this day I cannot recall that evening without a smile.

A series of evangelistic meetings was being held, and such of our teachers and boarders as wished to attend were marched each evening to the hall, Asahel, of course, being on duty. He was greatly troubled by the fact, which he communicated to me with great solemnity, that our little procession had become an object of interest to one or two soldiers who frequented the meetings, who left the hall when we left, and followed us to our home. It was difficult to complain of this, as I pointed out to Asahel,

as our schoolhouse lay in the direct route towards the barracks, and an appeal might very truly be met with the innocent reply that they also were on their way home. Therefore, notwithstanding Asahel's valorous suggestion that he might knock them down with his staff—a handsome bamboo cane, without which Asahel was never seen to stir day or night—my orders were that no notice whatever should be taken of our unwelcome followers, if followers they were; while I mentally resolved to miss none of the services hereafter, nor to leave my charges to the precarious aid of our pretty young teacher, even when seconded by Asahel and his staff.

It was towards the close of the week, the services were growingly impressive, and the girls were walking home under the calm moonlight in solemn silence. Asahel as usual strode at our side, vainly endeavouring to suit his long, springing steps to our slow paces, when, speaking in low, earnest tones to each other, our two soldier "followers" passed us. I think we all started, for the night was still, the shadows of the trees fell eerily across our path, we had all been occupied with our own meditations, and, truth to tell, had completely forgotten them.

But Asahel! His thoughts must have been deepest of all; for with a start, which might more literally be termed a leap, and a loud exclamation

of fear, he span round our little ranks, and in less time than I take to tell it had placed the girls between himself and our warrior foes. The soldiers could not fail to see that they had surprised us, and one of them turned to me with a polite, "Beg pardon, ma'am," and then hastened along the road towards the barracks. Fortunately for Asahel's character, the girls did not see the joke; it was as well that they should not discover that Asahel was not a hero. Heroes are not met with every day in this commonplace and matter-of-fact nineteenth century of ours; besides, many an unheroic man and woman has done good and faithful service, and has lived and died under the shadow of real life tragedy. Such was our Asahel.

When first he came into the service of the mission, Asahel did not live in the mission compound, but went home when his day's work was done. Home meant much to him: it meant first a small two-roomed house, his own property; it meant also in due time the sweet little bride to whom he became devotedly attached. What wonder? She was the most charming of mischievous, untamed, black-eyed girl-wives who ever tyrannized over weak man. No mother-in-law was there to bring the bright spirit into proper subjection; the only other inmate of the house was

the mildest old aunt imaginable, who only lived to humour and to cherish her darling. So there was love and harmony in the little home to which Asahel hastened night after night; and if the trio were not rich, they were almost ideally happy.

Fortunes do come unexpectedly, even outside the novelist's pages; and fortune came in most unlooked-for fashion to this little house. Asahel had gone to his work as usual; and Yamuna had settled down to rub and polish the brass and copper vessels, of whose brilliancy she was justly proud; and a little dog, to which she had been kind, was playing at her side. Forgetful that he was in the house of a vegetarian Hindu, doggie bethought him to dig up the mud floor for a bone. Yamuna contented herself at first with giving him a gentle scolding, but as he persisted she rose to frighten him away. A rim of something bright in the torn-up floor attracted her attention. She stooped and examined the spot; then, like a wise little woman, mindful that visitors might appear, she covered it up, sent the dog out of the room, and resumed her task.

. When her husband returned Yamuna uncovered the loosened floor, and together they dug it up, and drew out a brass vessel of considerable size, containing money and jewels of some value, evidently stored in that room by their possessor in troublous

times, never to be claimed again. Asahel and Yamuna became moderately wealthy. The young wife donned the pretty rings and necklets, and the mohrs were exchanged for modern rupees as required. Thus did fortune bestow her smile upon Asahel; a smile which, true to her fickle nature, she too soon changed into a frown. There are years in the lives of all into which a lifetime of experience is crowded. Yamuna had not been a year the light of his home, many weeks had not passed since the unexpected riches had relieved them of any anxiety for the future, when on one sad day Asahel returned from his work to find his darling dying, too far gone for even a farewell word, leaving in her place only a miserable little infant. For weeks thereafter he went about his work as one stunned and bereft of all interest in life; and it was only when the old aunt followed her darling, and the baby had none to care for him but his father, that the young widower aroused himself. Hitherto he had hardly noticed the child; now he begged a few weeks' holiday, and devoted himself to this new care. But baby did not take to his father's methods of nursing, and the woman whom he hired to help him groaned under the burden of a fretful and ailing child.

"You must get another wife," she said, "whose duty it will be to look after house and infant."

Asahel shrank from this course; but it seemed the only possible arrangement, and by the time he returned to his duties another mistress reigned in the little house in Yamuna's stead.

Some months later changes in the arrangements of the mission necessitated Asahel's leaving his home in the city, and taking up his abode for a time in the mission compound. His wife and child accompanied him. The woman was as great a contrast to the bright creature whom he had lost as could well be. It was as if he had determined that nothing should tempt him from his allegiance to her memory, in spirit at least. Chandra was already a widow—we discovered later that she had been a widow too often to be canny—she was not young, was small-pox marked, and had an ugly sinister expression of countenance which was difficult to overlook. Besides this, she discovered a strange aversion to the little boy, which (infant as he was) the child instinctively returned. It was not that she failed to bathe, and clothe, and feed him; but the tones of her voice were cold, her manner hard, the touch of her hands ungentle: in a word, love was absent, and he knew it. Before many days, however, the little fellow hardly needed his mother; he became a great favourite both with the teachers and pupils of the school, and he was much with his father. Poor

man! It was soon clear enough to all that he had been most unfortunate in his second marriage. Chandra's voice was too often heard in our quiet orderly compound, reminding us of the brawling woman upon the housetop, scolding her husband, or quarrelling with her neighbours. At last we interfered, and insisted that the family must find a home outside as before, Asahel alone remaining with us. Vowing vengeance upon us all, Chandra according to orders went away, leaving the child and the father to peace and quietness. It was a curious fact, noticed by us all, that from the day that Chandra left us, the little boy began to thrive as never before, and in a week or two was as round and as plump as we could desire. It was impossible to doubt now what we had always suspected, that Chandra had been in the habit of drugging the child with opium.

Our management of the child had only three weeks in which to prove itself successful. At the end of that time Chandra appeared one day, and falling at my feet vowed that her voice should henceforth be unheard and her presence be all but invisible if we would permit her return. She had, she said, missed the child terribly, and she longed to return without delay to her wifely and motherly duties. I sent for Asahel, who, with visible reluctance, con-

sented to receive her again. We insisted once more upon quietness, and assuring them that the very first quarrel would result in the removal of the whole family, dismissed them. Chandra repeated her promises of good behaviour, and held out her arms for the child, who left his father most unwillingly. I noted, half unconsciously, that a shudder passed over the man's whole body as she kissed the little fellow's forehead. He returned to his work in silence, however.

Two days later Asahel came to my side as I sat alone at work.

"Can I speak to Miss Saheb?" he said.

"Certainly," I said, "if you have not much to say, for I am very busy."

"I just want Miss Saheb to promise one thing: it is, that should anything happen to me, the mission would become father and mother to my child. I should like him to be brought up and educated with your boys."

"But that would probably involve his becoming a Christian."

"That would be my wish, Miss Saheb. I have learned many things from Anandrao" (the catechist who had prayers with our servants), "and though I do not say very much, I have thought a good deal. I should wish my boy to belong to the mission."

"I am quite sure there would be no difficulty about that, Asahel. If the mission did not undertake the care of the child, I should do it gladly myself."

"You are very good, Miss Saheb, and your words comfort my heart. But will you write a paper and sign it, and I shall sign it, so that there may be no trouble afterwards? I am very anxious about this."

Hitherto, truth to tell, I had listened and spoken without any great seriousness. The probability of Asahel's death was very remote, and I had more anxiety for the time taken from my belated report than for his child's future. Now, however, a certain tremor in his voice startled me, and laying down my pen I looked carefully at him, and even felt his pulse.

"Why, Asahel, you are growing nervous," I said. "Are you feeling ill?"

"No, I am not ill, Miss Saheb; but we do not know what may happen on any day, and I should like to have this matter of my child's future settled."

"Very well, Asahel," I answered; "it shall be done. As soon as I see Saheb I shall speak to him about it; and we shall consult the Magistrate Saheb about the legal form of such a paper. I do not know the law. You may be very sure of this, that

should anything happen to you we should do all that we could for your child."

It was the end of the month, when stores were got in, and bills paid, and school rolls and schedules filled in. Every moment was occupied. On the 1st, Asahel's duty was to carry out all unpaid bills, pay them, and hand in the receipts. Before starting for my morning's work in the city I gave him the necessary money, and told him that I should be at home to receive his accounts by a certain hour. I never saw him in life again.

On reaching home I found all in confusion and distress, and any number were ready to pour into my ears the evil tidings—"Asahel is dying." Ten minutes before, he had sat down to his mid-day meal, having done all his business, and laid upon my table, with his usual exactness, all the receipted accounts and the change received. Now he lay still and helpless; no remedy was of avail, and the doctor, whom we hastily summoned, said he had died some minutes before.

Chandra was apparently in great distress, but had the presence of mind to lock all the boxes, and to secrete the keys upon her own person. She also kept firm possession of the little boy.

For the next few hours all was confusion. There was little leisure for thought. The police and

medical officers held an inquest, and returned a verdict to the effect that Asahel had died of an overdose of opium, taken probably in his dinner. For reasons which they did not state they concluded that he had made the mistake himself, and we had no proof that it was otherwise. A cart was brought, and the helpless body, which a few hours before had been so active and lithe, was laid in it and carried away.

Now I remembered my promise about the child, and summoned Chandra to my room. I told her of my promise to Asahel, of which she acknowledged he had told her; but she wept at the hardness of heart which would desire to remove from her care the one only thing left to her. She magnanimously said, however, that the child should be allowed to choose between us. Needless to say more than one came forward and tried to win him; but he turned from us as from strangers, even from the girl who had been most devoted to him during the time, only two days before, that Chandra had been out of the compound. He now clung eagerly to his stepmother, who, with a smile of wicked triumph, turned from us and followed the cart containing the remains of the man whom at that moment most of us could have sworn she herself had killed.

I wrote to a magistrate at once to inquire whether

we had any claim upon the child, and his answer sadly removed all hope. The child was the property of his nearest relatives, and could not be taken from them without their fullest consent. So it came about that Chandra and the baby vanished completely, and were never heard of again.

"That boy will die as his father died," said one of the servants to me that night, "and Chandra has enough of money and jewellery in those boxes to enable her to live in comfort all the rest of her days. She is a bad woman." And although I faintly attempted to reprove the man for harbouring such thoughts, my own echoed them all too literally.

As for my promise, I grieved over its non-fulfilment for many days. Yet who could have foreseen that within forty-eight hours that healthy man would have thus disappeared from our midst, or have imagined that his anxiety about his child's future was caused by a premonition of his death? In this only could I find comfort, that had it been a case of illness of the slightest nature, even the press of many duties and heavy burdens which at that time lay upon me would have been as nothing before the father's anxiety and the child's future good.

THE BENI-ISRAEL.

NEARLY two thousand years ago, thus runs the tradition, seven men and seven women, strangers to those shores, were shipwrecked upon the western Indian coast, and there found a home and a shelter.

A BENI-ISRAEL GIRL.

They were a peculiar people, who carried with them neither holy book, nor definite history, nor a law, yet were rich in traditions which for them had the sacredness of revelation, and in observances which, unless they possessed a mysterious religious significance, carried no meaning at all. Yet were these traditions and ceremonies handed down through the generations, and remain until this day.

These people were somewhat of a mystery to their neighbours. Hindus called them *Shanwár*

Teli—"Saturday oil-men"—from the fact that they would do no trade upon the seventh day of the week, and they reckoned them to be a caste of Mahometans. Mahometans, however, disowned them, and called them "Yahudi"—Jews—which title they rejected with scorn. They called themselves "Beni-Israel"—the children of Israel—and there is little doubt that they had a claim to the ancient name, by which, indeed, they still love to be known.

Doubtless, as they grew and multiplied and scattered themselves up and down the coast, there may have been some intermarriage with the people of the land; but down through the centuries were handed certain ancient customs—the observance of the seventh day of the week as a day of rest; the circumcision of male infants on their eighth day; the setting apart of one day in the year as a day of mourning for sin; also certain family names, very familiar to those who study the ancient Hebrew Scriptures. All of these proclaimed this little colony to be, in the first instance at least, members of the race beloved by us for the fathers' sake.

It was the late Dr. Wilson of Bombay who discovered this small remnant of the lost ten tribes, and both he and the early American missionaries became deeply interested in their welfare. Schools

were opened for their children, and they were assisted in the task of rediscovering themselves. Their own Scriptures were once more put into their hands, and since those days they have made great progress. They have built meeting-houses for themselves in all the towns and villages where any number of them are settled. They have acquainted themselves with their own law. Some of the better educated amongst them have got into correspondence with the leading Israelites in England and America. One, for instance, who has since become a Christian, interchanged letters with both Dr. Adolph Saphir and Dr. Edersheim. One or two have even gone on pilgrimage to the sacred city. It was an interesting occasion in more than one way to us when one of these, a Mr. Isaac, returned to his native place, and at the request of some of our Christians gave an account of his experiences in our little church. He began after this fashion: "It is a pleasure to me to tell you of what I saw in Palestine, the 'Holy Land' to both Israelite and Christian." He even gave some account of the Holy Sepulchre, and he carried his audience fully with him when he bewailed the possession of spots so sacred to us all by the "infidel Turk."

The men, in all the towns where they are settled, are industrious, independent, and have a decided

tendency to rise socially. Many are in government employment, and earn comfortable incomes; and those who have more than enough help their poorer brethren, so that we rarely if ever see a Beni-Israel begging. This *esprit de corps* is one of the pleasantest features in the little community. In our city they all live together in one quarter of the town, and there is not a cleaner or better-kept district. They have in their midst a prayer-room, a library, and various benevolent institutions, and would doubtless have schools had not the missionary societies already occupied this field.

The one difficulty has been with the women, who have borrowed from Hindus and Mahometans many silly superstitions in addition to some which are peculiarly their own. But this hindrance to the rise of the community is fast disappearing. The next generation of Beni-Israel women will, as far as large towns are concerned, be comparatively well educated. Several societies have large girls' schools, and others are trying to reach older girls and women in their homes.

It is curious to think that in a certain sense missionaries have given these children of Israel their faith; and sad too, for we would fain see them come over to us altogether, accepting in Jesus Christ the

Messiah for whose appearance they, with all their brethren, still wait. But we have not been without encouragement. In our city, through bitter persecution, one after another has professed the Christian faith; and we have in our church—let me name one family, the very names are dear. The old father, long since gone to rest, was Bandoji (Benjamin). He came alone, but was followed by his daughter Abigail; and at last, unable to resist the pleadings of the old man, came Sarah his wife, and with her three children, Jochebed, Dinah, and Elizabeth. Rachel alone remains outside of the Christian Church, though we may hope that she will yet take her place with the rest of the family circle.

LOST.

LITERALLY a waif, her path lay alongside of ours for a few days only, then—

She was a Brahman girl of some fourteen years of age, physically a fine example of her caste—tall, fair, and well-formed; and she was as quick and intelligent as she was "bonny." But, alas! her opportunities of learning had been in the school of evil. Her father had been imprisoned, and was eventually executed, for the murder of a child; the girl had also undergone a sentence as an accessory to the brutal crime. She had acted as a decoy to the poor little girl; and the jewels, for the sake of which the deed had been done, were found upon her person.

We heard the sad tale when following our daily round of work in the city, and we felt that some effort must be made to rescue the girl from the streets. We sought her out, and persuaded her to

come to the mission-house for a talk over her future prospects. The case was a difficult one to deal with, and the more so that evidently even that conscience which in the heathen is to them a law was asleep. Her language was low; her remorse for her own share in the murder very slight—she did not even mourn for her father; and her desire to rise once more into a good and pure life was so very vague that we doubted how far it really existed. Yet here she was, let loose upon the world, her good name gone and her caste broken; truly a waif, for whom, unless a helping hand could reach her, there was no apparent alternative save a life of sin.

Sita was evidently flattered by our interest, and condescended to listen to the suggestions upon which we had agreed in mission council. These were, that until we had matured plans and found for her a home, she should take up her abode in the mission-house, and begin to learn reading and sewing. She was to sleep in my room, to stay in certain parts of the house when we were out at our work, to make herself useful as far as possible, and on pain of expulsion never to leave the compound. Sita accepted all our conditions gladly. I imagine that the novelty of living in a European bungalow attracted her. Possibly there was still some faint

desire to return to a respectable life; if so, she must have known well that this was her only chance.

Things went well for a time, and we began to allow ourselves to hope. She seemed to find enjoyment in every task which was set before her; her supple fingers fell into the various uses of the needle almost unconsciously; reading proved no difficulty; the missionary's wife who undertook the lessons declared that this was the pleasantest pupil whom she had ever taught. I can recall now the thrill of hope with which I watched the intelligent countenance as, sitting upon the floor at that lady's feet, she looked earnestly up into her face, listening to the words of life. Surely this brand would be plucked from the burning.

Thus Sita became the object of our tenderest care and watchfulness, and we even began to wonder how we should get on without her when a suitable refuge had been found. For, of course, to keep her long in our home, so open to visitors of every description, so often left unprotected when we were out at our work, was impossible; and neither boarding-schools nor orphanages were very suitable places for a girl who had been in prison for aiding in a brutal murder.

To our sorrow and sore disappointment the home we searched for was never needed. We had been

too sanguine. Sita had acquired the nature of the Arab; the sheltered and necessarily confined life became, after its novelty wore off, unbearable. We discovered, after a time, that when we were out Sita was out too; and at length one day she disappeared, never to return. We searched for her, and mourned sadly over her; but she had chosen her life, and it was that of the streets.

Yet some shadow of a desire must now and again have fallen upon the poor lost girl after "the better things" of which she had had a glimpse. Twice, at an interval of several years, I heard of a poor young woman appearing at the doors of mission bungalows far apart, and very far indeed from her own old home, who bore the name of Sita, and who stated, as a reason for expecting friendship and aid, that she had once lived in our mission-house. In neither case, however, was anything made of the poor wanderer. Who can tell whether she may not yet tire of the far country, and return humbly to her true Father's house? Never was prodigal son or daughter turned from that door.

A MUTINY.

CERTAINLY missionaries have no right to complain of any lack of variety either in their occupations or in the characters and incidents with which they have to deal. This proposition has not the merit of freshness, but it is suggested afresh by the recollection of a "strike" in one of our schools, and of the curious scenes through which we passed in connection with it.

Our head teacher had been for some weeks very unmanageable, causing us more trouble, as we often remarked, than all the pupils taken together. She was a legacy from the former superintendent of the school, and did not conform easily to our arrangements; besides, she was not a Christian, and we had been much tempted on several occasions to dismiss her and to provide a teacher of our own choice, who would be more willing to carry out our plans for the future of the school. Thus we were not heart-broken when we received from her one morning a

letter containing her resignation, and request for a certificate. She had received, as she condescended to inform us, promises of work from two places, both offering a much higher salary than we gave her; and though it grieved her to leave our service, she felt that she must seize the opportunity of a rise in position and prospects when God thus placed it within her reach.

We drove down to the school, cheerfully accepted the resignation, wrote the certificate, and at once set about the search for a successor. Having let it be known in likely quarters that teachers might send in applications to us, we returned to the school to take our usual classes.

Everything was still. The classroom downstairs was empty, classroom upstairs also empty, and in the large schoolroom we found the whole school standing in solemn and dignified array, as was our custom at roll-call, or at opening and closing prayers.

"What is this, girls?" I asked. "Go at once to your classrooms."

"Please, Missie Bai, we have something to say to you," said one of the older girls.

"Oh indeed!" I replied. "Say it at once, then; we cannot waste time."

"We wished to say that we all intend leaving

your school. We shall not stay here after our teacher goes away."

"Is that all you have to say?"

"Yes."

"Very well, then, children, you can go. But, first, I may mention what perhaps your teacher has forgotten to tell you, that she leaves you at her own request because she has found a better situation. I am sorry that she does not seem to care for you as much as you do for her. And now good-bye. You will, of course, go downstairs as usual very quietly, and take all your own books and slates with you, leaving upon my desk those which belong to the school. I give you ten minutes"—here I laid my watch upon the table—"to gather your things, after which I shall lock up the classrooms."

Never were sixty girls so taken by surprise. Furtive glances I caught as they slowly moved about the rooms, which I met with gracious smiles. The teachers, especially the lady who was the cause of the disturbance, hovered about helplessly near my table, hardly knowing whether to speak or to be silent. Meantime, though it was no easy matter to conceal my amusement, I was busily employed gathering class books and rolls, dusting and rolling up maps, and tidying cupboards, as if a mutiny were the most ordinary, everyday occurrence,

or at most a slight deviation from the dull, trivial round of translation, grammar, and history lessons.

When the ten minutes were up, I rang the bell and walked slowly round the classrooms, saw them cleared, locked them, and followed the last straggler downstairs. Here I only delayed to remind the head teacher, who lived below, that as the school was now closed it would be well that she should remove her goods to some other house at an early date. Then, with politest adieus, I stepped into the garri and drove away, leaving a very blank-looking little group standing around the doorstep.

We had not to wait long for the next scene. On the same afternoon a servant came to my room with the announcement that a deputation from the city were in the front veranda, and asked if I would be pleased to speak with them.

"Alas, my holiday is not to be a very long one," sighed I.

The veranda was pretty full. There were a number of the leading men of the district in which our school was situated, most of them indeed being fathers of present or former pupils; all the teachers were also there, of whom I can only say that they had less dignity about them than usual. A background was formed in the outer porch by some twenty of the older girls, who stood looking anx-

iously in upon us. The situation was in all respects satisfactory.

One of the gentlemen opened the proceedings with a graceful speech to the effect that I was their father and their mother. This preliminary remark had not the charm of novelty, but it struck me on this occasion with unusual force from the fact that the speaker stroked tenderly as he spoke a handsome patriarchal beard, and wore the glorious crown of a hoary head. I—well, I had not yet seen thirty summers, and should probably have preferred the filial to the paternal or maternal relationship in this connection. This was a trifle, however, not to be resented under the circumstances. I acknowledged the intended compliment therefore, and he proceeded :—

"They, the parents, were for ever indebted to the mission for the kind care which we exercised towards their daughters, for the thorough education which we gave them, for the moral and religious training which they received in our schools. They were therefore the more grieved when they heard what had occurred that morning; they were angry with their children for their naughtiness, and rudeness, and ingratitude towards their kind Missie Bai; they regretted deeply the pain which had been given. They therefore hoped that their kind Missie Bai

would be pleased to accept an apology, and would reopen the school to-morrow."

One of the teachers now took up the tale. "They were most humbly penitent for their share in this unfortunate occurrence, and they wished here and now to confess the whole truth. They had had no rise in their salaries for a long time, yet they had not liked to approach me on the subject in any direct manner; but they had hoped by means of the letter which the head teacher had written to me to draw me on to ask her and them what their cause of dissatisfaction might be, and why they should think of leaving our service. Had I done so, their intention was to speak of this matter. Things had not, however, taken the turn which they had expected; it had not occurred to them that I should accept of the resignation, far less dismiss the whole school! They now desired to say that they were very sorry that they had not chosen a more honest way of letting their wishes be made known."

It only now remained for the children in the porch to be summoned by parents and teachers, and commanded to throw themselves at Missie Bai's feet and to entreat her pardon.

I now closed the proceedings with a little speech to the effect that any teacher in any of our schools who wished to improve her position was most wel-

come to do so at any time. They got from our mission, as they very well knew, quite as much as they were worth to us, and perhaps this was the best opportunity to state that we had no intention of raising any salaries at present. As for the parents of the children, I thanked them for their good opinion, and put in a little word urging more regular attention to the lessons given for home preparation, so that our school might earn for itself a good position amongst the educational agencies in the city. To the girls, as I should probably have something to say to-morrow, it was enough to say salaam ; and so, with polite salutations on both sides, the little party took leave.

Scene three was not nearly so impressive. It occurred on the following morning, when once more I found the classrooms empty and the schoolroom crowded. The dux of the school read a formal apology, in what was, I suppose, intended for poetry; after which I was duly garlanded, and presented with bouquets and bracelets of roses and jessamine.

For a few days the steadiness, punctuality, and general good-behaviour of that school were so pronounced that, had we believed they would last, we should have felt almost alarmed lest our missionary occupation had gone. The goodness passed away in due time, however; but we never had another mutiny.

ASHABI.

"THE work is very depressing just now; in fact, no pupil is giving me satisfaction save dear old Ashabi." Thus runs my journal for one day; and indeed, during several years, there are few pages of the volumes upon which Ashabi's name does not appear prominently.

"Old" stands as a term of endearment in this case, rather than as giving a true estimate of the lady's age. She cannot have lived much over forty years, and she does not look so old as she is. She has a small, neat figure; her movements suggest a woman of twenty-five; and her face, were it not marked deeply by small-pox, would also be very youthful.

Still, all being said, as she has two grown-up sons and two married daughters, and has been for twenty years a widow, I can hardly claim for this heroine that she has youth in her favour. Nor has she beauty: small-pox, even when it spares the life of its victim, ruthlessly destroys skin and complexion.

In Ashabi's case, I doubt whether at any time she had much to boast of in regard to outward form. When her name first appears in my journal, she is described as plain and insignificant-looking, with a "dour" expression of countenance, and very little to recommend her, save that she could already read and write her own language, and was quick and diligent as a pupil. She was a religious woman in the Mahometan sense of the term, was most punctilious in regard to the hours of prayer, studied the Koran faithfully, was devoted to the memory of the Prophet, and showed the strongest aversion to the name of Jesus Christ in any connection, save as one of the prophets. She could pour forth traditions upon every conceivable subject, and, needless to add, knew far more than I did about Adam and Noah, Abraham and Moses.

For long her opposition to our teaching tried my patience sorely; her ready intelligence when working at any other subject rendered the more apparent her bitter and rigid attitude towards the Bible lesson. It affected the whole circle more or less; it affected, more than I was willing to own, my comfort even in preparing the lesson.

The change in such cases is as a rule very gradual, and takes place almost unconsciously to both teacher and pupil. With Ashabi my experience was quite

the reverse. On one day she was the most bitter opponent of the Bible amongst our pupils; on the next she brought me a copy of St. Luke's Gospel, with a friendly smile and the words,—

"I wish to read the Injil, Missie Bai."

"This is the same Injil which I read with the children, Ashabi, and which you have always disliked so much."

"I know it is the same, and I wish to read it now. The type of this copy is very small, and I thought you would perhaps give me a larger copy."

"Certainly, Bibi," I said; "you shall have one at once. Will you tell me what has made you so suddenly change your mind?"

"Yes, Missie Bai. Ishmael, my son, brought me this copy last evening, and said, 'Mother, read this Injil. You need not have any fear. It is beautiful and good.' So I promised my son to read the book."

"And how had Ishmael seen the book?" I asked.

"He belongs to a club of young men who have not had much education, and who read together to increase their knowledge. They have just finished reading the Injil."

Truly it was a day of good tidings—my most hopeless pupil completely changed, and, better still, news of a society of young men unconnected with

missionaries, and unknown to them, meeting together to study the history of Jesus Christ. There was something touching, too, in this boy's desire that his mother should read what had so deeply interested himself.

No time was lost in procuring a copy of the Gospel in larger type, and my offer to read it with Ashabi was accepted gratefully. From that time onwards, on every possible day, I devoted ten minutes to this pupil. Our plan of study was simple. No explanations were made, save such as were necessary to the understanding of the passage read; if the meaning was not clear, the verses were read over a second and even a third time slowly and carefully. Sometimes we would retrace our steps a chapter or two, in order to understand not only a special incident or parable, but the events or circumstances which led to it. Ashabi's method of study was a constant lesson to myself, as was her whole mental and spiritual history from the day upon which her opposition to Jesus Christ and His gospel was withdrawn. The change in her attitude was as complete as it was unexpected. It always appeared to me that the moment of her consent to read the Gospel, whatever internal conflict this may have implied, was the moment of Christ's victory. From the day on which we began to read the early

chapters of St. Luke's history—hard chapters for either Jew or Mahometan—all was accepted simply and literally, prejudice was gone, sympathy was intense, her tone in reading became as reverent and tender as it had been hard and defiant. As for the cherished Koran, it somehow reached the upper shelf of the bookcase, and was ere long half-hidden under loose papers and thick dust.

I am tempted to extract some of her remarks from my journal:—

"I like the stories of the casting out of devils, for Satan has, I think, special power over us Mussulmans. Our children are specially possessed. They come to us like wild beasts, and we hardly know how to make them human." * Then, very tenderly, "But He cast out the devils. They cannot be where He is."……

"Missie Bai, I read late last night about the sufferings and death of Jesus the Messiah—at least, I tried to read, but could not. It was dreadful that He should come to us to be so treated! And when I thought, 'I too am one of the same race,' I closed the book and put it away; the thought was terrible."……

"I seem to *know* Jesus the Messiah."

"I think you do know him, Bibi. Will you tell

* This is a libel upon Mahometan children.

me what He does for you when you think of Him?"

"He calms me.".....

"'Besides women and children.' You English-women don't know what that means, Missie Bai. I think these words were put in for Mussulmans!"

Some of the mental struggles through which Ashabi passed were severe, and, as with us all, there were both defeats and victories.

When her younger son reached a marriageable age, she began to look around amongst her acquaintances for a suitable bride for him. The child whom she fixed upon was a pupil in one of our mission schools—a very sweet, dainty little creature of about nine years of age. Ashabi approached the parents before she mentioned the matter at all to me, for she knew well my views on the subject of child-marriage. They agreed to the match on condition that the betrothal and wedding should take place with no further delay than was involved in

making the necessary preparations. Ashabi now took me into her confidence, and explained her motives in truly Jesuitical fashion.

"You see, Missie Bai, I am most anxious to have the training of the child myself. She comes here as my daughter, not as Ishmael's wife, and it will be my happiness to teach her. Then she will be in your care too, and out of the hands of a most ignorant father and mother."

All of which was true; but the apologetic tone, and a certain return of the old hardness, showed that Ashabi's sense of right was being violated, and that these were but excuses made to her conscience and to me. I watched the struggle anxiously, and regretted deeply when the marriage was celebrated with due solemnity and the usual expense and debt.

The next glimpse of her inner history amongst my notes is in connection with the visit of a learned Moulvi to our city, who was very successful in stirring up the people to greater zeal for their own faith and a deeper distrust of the missionaries. Some account of his work I give in another connection. As I have already hinted, with Ashabi's increasing knowledge of the Christian faith, there was an unconscious loosening of her hold upon her own religion. Very gradually old customs were dropped, until a day came when, as she told me with some

amusement, she had quite lost count of the months and festivals. "I used to be the person to whom all came for information," she said merrily.

The Moulvi was not long in the city ere he heard of her, and he sent a special polite invitation to her to call and see him, which she did, like Nicodemus, "by night."

The usual respectful salutations having been exchanged, they seemed to have plunged at once into a theological discussion. One would have given much to have overheard it. Her own account of it was something like this: "The Moulvi Saheb told me that he had heard that I read the Gospel, and had given up reading the Koran. Of course I confessed that this was true. I told him that for long I had not wished to read Christian books, but that I had found the Injil *good*. The Moulvi Saheb is a good man, Missie Bai; he was very kind and patient with me. He did not say the Injil was not good—that would have made me angry; but he reminded me that the Moslem faith accepts the Gospel too (although learned men have said that it was changed by Christians to suit their belief), and acknowledges Jesus the Messiah to be a great prophet and revealer of God to man. He also reads the Gospel and honours Jesus; but he says he still believes that God sent one prophet greater than He. I told him

that I had been thinking so much of Jesus that I had really forgotten all else, and he said this was a great mistake. I ought, while reading the Injil, to continue the study of my own faith too."

"What did you say to that?" I asked.

"I felt that what he said was perhaps true—that I had somehow dropped my own faith without knowing it. And so, Missie Bai, I have got down the Koran, and shall read it with the Gospel."

Never did learned Moulvi give wiser advice. I watched the progress of events now with an anxiety I might have spared myself. For a few days only the Koran and the Gospel lay side by side. Then the former was silently returned to the upper, dust-covered shelf, and the Gospel once more reigned supreme. Neither Ashabi nor I ever referred to this significant fact, but it spoke far more than she could have done of the power of the true to overcome the false.

Some time later I wished to get a copy of the Koran, and asked Ashabi whether she could procure one for me. There was a slight hesitation in her answer, which made me add that I was willing to pay well for it if necessary.

"It is not that, Missie Bai, but—will mine do?"

"But yours is very precious to you, is it not? You must not part with it."

"That is nothing if it serve your purpose. Take mine, Missie Bai," and she brought the old volume down and tenderly dusted it.

"But you must allow me to pay you for it," I said.

"No, Missie Bai; if it is worth anything at all, it is worth more than money. It was given me by my husband when Ishmael was born, and I read it much for many years. It is old, and not worth your acceptance, but take it."

"And I may give you nothing in exchange for it?"

"If Missie Bai would give me the whole Bible in Urdu some day my spirit would be made glad."

Alas, poor Moulvi Saheb! and is this all you have gained by your careful teaching?

The exchange was effected, and the Bible which took the place of the Koran has been, as Ashabi expressed it, "doing hard work" ever since, being read not only by herself but by a circle of friends to whom it is sent on short periodical visits. "It is becoming difficult to find my own mark amongst them all," she would sometimes say. This was a difficulty of which I was by no means inclined to complain. "The more marks the better," I would reply.

The influence of the teaching and spirit of Christ was greater in Ashabi's case than I can well tell. It revolutionized her nature completely; it changed

her very countenance. Those who saw her less frequently than I did often remarked upon the bright little woman, and one friend who knew her in the old hard days failed to recognize her when they met after the change. Yet the growth was so gradual and so unconscious that I doubt much how far she realized it herself. As for me, the whole was so manifestly God's work that I almost feared with my rough hand to touch it. To this day Ashabi has never said in words, "I am a Christian." Others, even amongst her Mahometan friends, have said it often enough.

Is she a Christian? I shall give one more reminiscence. If it does not answer the question, I cannot. It is the history of the greatest struggle with herself which I witnessed, and it was to me at the time an "infallible proof" of the presence of a living Christ. Only He could have so worked in any human soul.

We had in the ordinary course of our reading reached the command, "*Love your enemies.*" Ashabi paused over the words, and then, as she often did when impressed, read the verse again.

"*That* is a command which cannot be taken as it stands," she remarked in a decided tone.

"Why?" I asked.

"Because it is quite impossible to obey it. If

you had an enemy you would know that, Missie Bai."

"But, Bibi, it is there as a positive command, is it not?"

"It must be poetry," was her rather sharp reply, "and poetry never means all it says."

I repressed a laugh, and pointed out the fact that poetry was printed in lines, and that this came as one of a series of commands, all of which appeared to be literally intended.

Something of the old, hard expression crossed her face, as she said doggedly,—

"Well, this one is simply impossible. He could not mean it. He must have wished us to remember that, as far as possible, we should make no enemies, and that we ought to be kind and loving to all. Why, Missie Bai, you must have an enemy to know what it means. *I* have an enemy, and I know. Shall I tell you?"

"Please."

"Well, Ishmael is just twenty. He was an infant a few days old when his father died of cholera very suddenly, leaving me with four children and nothing to live upon. His sister was rich, and had no children, and it would have been most natural had she offered to help me, for a time at least. Not that I wished her help; nobody has given me help yet,

save only"—this with a tender change of tone—"save only God. Well, the body of my husband was not yet carried away when my sister-in-law came in, and before the mourners, and before my children, she insulted me in such a manner as no respectable woman would bear. I could not after that have accepted a cowrie from her, no, not if my infants had been starving. I pointed her to the door, and from that day have neither seen nor heard of her. You know, Missie Bai, how careful a young widow must be of her good name. Were I to speak to that woman, my sons would cry out upon me. It would be as if I acknowledged the insult to be true."

The case was a hard one, and I felt tongue-tied, save that I reminded her of the insults heaped upon Christ. But bitter memories had been stirred; and I left her sadly, dreading that she would brood over them and harden her heart against Christ and His teaching.

Next morning I drove over early, having spent an anxious night myself. But that relief of some sort had reached her was apparent at once; she was as cheerful and brisk as usual. When we were alone, she began at once,—

"You remember our reading yesterday, Missie Bai? How hard it was. After you had gone away I tried to forget it. I cooked a special dinner for the

children, I read, and I worked; but I could get no rest. Then I lay down, and covered my face; but there was no sleep for me. Those words came one after the other, and wrote themselves upon my heart. Each word was so hard. 'LOVE' (would nothing but LOVE do?) 'YOUR' (Missie Bai, that meant MY) 'ENEMIES;' and I thought of that dreadful day again, and I *hated* my enemy. I tried to think of other things, but I could not. My rest was gone; I rose and put on my chaddar.....I could not think very much; but after a little I called Ishmael, and we walked across the city in the darkness, and I knocked at my enemy's door. They had gone to rest, but they rose; and I crossed her threshold after twenty years, and we made peace."

The story was told in rather a matter-of-fact fashion; she entered into no particulars regarding her reception by her enemy, nor was there the slightest appearance of pride or self-satisfaction in manner or words. That night visit might have been the most commonplace of friendly calls, save that there was a new serenity and calm about her which reminded one of the sea on the morning after a storm.

What that storm had been even I could only dimly guess. In India most emphatically a woman's good name

"Is the immediate jewel of her soul,"

of which, if robbed, she is "poor indeed;" and during that night of anxiety I had never dreamed that the struggle would end as it did.

That a little of the old nature remained was almost a relief. It appeared in the only additional remark she vouchsafed on the subject, which was made with a happy twinkle in her eye just as I was leaving the house,—

"I am very glad my boys have situations and that my daughters are married, Missie Bai!"